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THE MEMOIRS OF  
ALEXANDER  
HERZEN

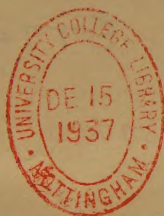
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## NOTE

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by arrangement from the sole  
complete and copyright edition  
of *My Past and Thoughts*, that  
published in the original Russian  
at Berlin, 1921.

*MY PAST AND THOUGHTS  
THE MEMOIRS OF  
ALEXANDER HERZEN  
THE AUTHORISED TRANSLATION  
TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN  
BY CONSTANCE GARNETT*

VOLUME I



LONDON  
CHATTO & WINDUS

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## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

A FEW words about Herzen's parentage will make his narrative more intelligible to the English reader. Herzen's father, Ivan Yakovlyev, was a very wealthy nobleman belonging to one of the most aristocratic families of Russia. In 1811, at the age of forty-two, he married (so Brückner tells us in his *History of Russian Literature*) at Stuttgart a girl of sixteen, whose name was Henriette Haag, though she was always in Russia called Luise Ivanovna, as easier to pronounce. As he neglected to repeat the marriage ceremony in Russia, their son was there illegitimate. Yakovlyev is said to have given him the surname Herzen, because he was the 'child of his heart.'





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PART I  
NURSERY & UNIVERSITY  
( 1812-1835 )

*'WHEN memories of the past return  
And the old road again we tread,  
Slowly the passions of old days  
Come back to life within the soul ;  
Old griefs and joys are here unchanged,  
Again the once familiar thrill  
Stirs echoes in the troubled heart ;  
And for remembered woes we sigh.'*

OGARYOV : Humorous Verse.

Chapter I

MY NURSE AND THE *GRANDE ARMÉE* — THE FIRE OF  
MOSCOW — MY FATHER WITH NAPOLEON — GENERAL  
ILOVAISKY — TRAVELLING WITH THE FRENCH PRISONERS  
— THE PATRIOTISM OF C. CALOT — THE COMMON  
MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY — DIVIDING  
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**V**ERA ARTAMONOVNA, come tell me again how  
the French came to Moscow,' I used to say,  
rolling myself up in the quilt and stretching in my crib,  
which was sewn round with linen that I might not fall  
out.

'Oh ! what's the use of telling you, you've heard it  
so many times, besides it's time to go to sleep ; you had  
better get up a little earlier to-morrow,' the old woman  
would usually answer, although she was as eager to repeat  
her favourite story as I was to hear it.

'But do tell me a little bit. How did you find out,  
how did it begin ?'

'This was how it began. You know what your papa  
is—he is always putting things off ; he was getting  
ready and getting ready, and much use it was ! Every

one was saying "It's time to set off; it's time to go; what is there to wait for, there's no one left in the town." But no, Pavel Ivanovitch<sup>1</sup> and he kept talking of how they would go together, and first one wasn't ready and then the other. At last we were packed and the carriage was ready; the family sat down to lunch, when all at once our head cook ran into the dining-room as pale as a sheet, and announced: "The enemy has marched in at the Dragomilovsky Gate." Our hearts did sink. "The power of the Cross be with us!" we cried. Everything was upside down. While we were bustling about, sighing and groaning, we looked and down the street came galloping dragoons in such helmets with horses' tails streaming behind. The gates had all been closed, and here was your papa left behind for a treat and you with him; your wet nurse Darya still had you at the breast, you were so weak and delicate.'

And I smiled with pride, pleased that I had taken part in the war.

'At the beginning we got along somehow, for the first few days, that is; it was only that two or three soldiers would come in and ask by signs whether there was something to drink; we would take them a glass each, to be sure, and they would go away and touch their caps to us, too. But then, you see, when fires began and kept getting worse and worse, there was such disorder, plundering and all sorts of horrors. At that time we were living in the lodge at the Princess Anna Borissovna's and the house caught fire; then Pavel Ivanovitch said, "Come to me, my house is built of brick, it stands far back in the courtyard and the walls are thick."

'So we went, masters and servants all together, there was no difference made; we went out into the Tverskoy

<sup>1</sup> Golohvastov, the husband of my father's younger sister.

Boulevard and the trees were beginning to burn—we made our way at last to the Golohvastovs' house and it was simply blazing, flames from every window. Pavel Ivanovitch was dumbfounded, he could not believe his eyes. Behind the house there is a big garden, you know; we went into it thinking we should be safe there. We sat there on the seats grieving, when, all at once, a mob of drunken soldiers were upon us; one fell on Pavel Ivanovitch, trying to pull off his travelling coat; the old man would not give it up, the soldier pulled out his sword and struck him on the face with it so that he kept the scar to the end of his days; the others set upon us, one soldier tore you from your nurse, opened your baby-clothes to see if there were any money-notes or diamonds hidden among them, saw there was nothing there, and so the scamp purposely tore your clothes and flung them down. As soon as they had gone away, we were in trouble again. Do you remember our Platon who was sent for a soldier? He was dreadfully fond of drink and was very much exhilarated that day; he tied on a sabre and walked about like that. The day before the enemy entered, Count Rastoptchin<sup>1</sup> had distributed all sorts of weapons at the arsenal; so that was how he had got hold of a sabre. Towards the evening he saw a dragoon ride into the yard; there was a horse standing near the stable, the dragoon wanted to take it, but Platon rushed headlong at him and, catching hold of the bridle, said: "The horse is ours, I won't give it you." The dragoon threatened him with a pistol, but we could see it was not loaded; the master himself saw what was happening and shouted to Platon: "Let the horse alone, it's not your business." But not a bit of it! Platon pulled out his sabre and struck the man on the head, and he staggered, and Platon struck him

<sup>1</sup> Governor of Moscow in 1812. Believed to have set fire to the city when the French entered. See Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.—(Translator's Note.)

again and again. "Well," thought we, "now the hour of our death is come; when his comrades see him, it will be the end of us." But when the dragoon fell off, Platon seized him by the feet and dragged him to a pit full of mortar and threw him in, poor fellow, although he was still alive; his horse stood there and did not stir from the place, but stamped its foot on the ground as though it understood; our servants shut it in the stable; it must have been burnt there. We all hurried out of the courtyard, the fire was more and more dreadful; worn out and with nothing to eat, we got into a house that was still untouched, and flung ourselves down to rest; in less than an hour, our people were shouting from the street: "Come out, come out! Fire! Fire!" Then I took a piece of green baize from the billiard table and wrapped you in it to keep you from the night air; and so we made our way as far as the Tverskoy Square. There the French were putting the fire out, because some great man of theirs was living in the governor's house; we sat simply in the street; sentries were walking everywhere, others were riding by on horseback. And you were screaming, straining yourself with crying, your nurse had no more milk, no one had a bit of bread. Natalya Konstantinovna was with us then, a wench of spirit, you know; she saw that some soldiers were eating something in a corner, took you and went straight to them, showed you and said "*mangé* for the little one"; at first they looked at her so sternly and said "*allez, allez,*" but she fell to scolding them. "Ah, you cursed brutes," said she, "you this and that"; the soldiers did not understand a word, but they burst out laughing and gave her some bread soaked in water for you and a crust for herself. Early in the morning an officer came up and gathered together all the men and your papa with them, leaving only the women and Pavel Ivanovitch who was wounded, and took them to put out the fire in the



houses near by, so we remained alone till evening; we sat and cried and that was all. When it was dusk, the master came back and with him an officer . . . .'

Allow me to take the old woman's place and continue her narrative. When my father had finished his duties as a fire-brigade man, he met by the Strastny monastery a squadron of Italian cavalry; he went up to their officer and told him in Italian the position in which his family was placed. When the Italian heard *la sua dolce favella* he promised to speak to the duc de Trévise,<sup>1</sup> and as a preliminary measure to put a sentry to guard us and prevent barbarous scenes such as had taken place in the Golohvastovs' garden. He sent an officer to accompany my father with these instructions. Hearing that the whole party had eaten nothing for two days, the officer led us all to a shop that had been broken into; the choicest tea and Levant coffee had been thrown about on the floor, together with a great number of dates, figs, and almonds; our servants stuffed their pockets full, and had plenty of dessert anyway. The sentry turned out to be of the greatest use to us: a dozen times gangs of soldiers began molesting the luckless group of women and servants encamped in the corner of Tverskoy Square, but they moved off immediately at his command.

Mortier remembered that he had known my father in Paris and informed Napoleon; Napoleon ordered him to present himself next morning. In a shabby, dark blue, short coat with bronze buttons, intended for sporting wear, without his wig, in high boots that had not been cleaned for several days, with dirty linen and unshaven chin, my father—who worshipped decorum and strict etiquette—made his appearance in the throne

<sup>1</sup> Mortier, duc de Trévise, general under the Revolution and Napoleon. Killed, 1835, by the infernal machine of Fieschi.—*(Translator's Note.)*

room of the Kremlin Palace at the summons of the Emperor of the French.

Their conversation which I have heard many times is fairly correctly given in Baron Fain's <sup>1</sup> *History* and in that of Mihailovsky-Danilevsky.

After the usual phrases, abrupt words and laconic remarks, to which a deep meaning was ascribed for thirty-five years, till men realised that their meaning was often quite trivial, Napoleon blamed Rastoptchin for the fire, said that it was Vandalism, declared as usual his invincible love of peace, maintained that his war was against England and not against Russia, boasted that he had set a guard on the Foundling Hospital and the Uspensky Cathedral, complained of Alexander, said that he was surrounded by bad advisers and that his (Napoleon's) peaceful dispositions were not made known to the Emperor.

My father observed that it was rather for a conqueror to make offers of peace.

'I have done what I could ; I have sent to Kutuzov,<sup>2</sup> he will not enter into any negotiations and does not bring my offer to the cognizance of the Tsar. If they want war, it is not my fault—they shall have war.'

After all this comedy, my father asked him for a pass to leave Moscow.

'I have ordered no passes to be given to any one ; why are you going ? What are you afraid of ? I have ordered the markets to be opened.'

The Emperor of the French apparently forgot at that moment that, in addition to open markets, it is as well to have a closed house, and that life in the Tverskoy Square in the midst of enemy soldiers is anything but

<sup>1</sup> Fain, François, Baron (1778-1837), French historian and secretary of Napoleon.

<sup>2</sup> Commander-in-chief of the Russian army in 1812. See Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.—(Translator's Notes.)

agreeable. My father pointed this out to him ; Napoleon thought a moment and suddenly asked :

‘ Will you undertake to convey a letter from me to the Emperor ? On that condition I will command them to give you a permit to leave the town with all your household.’

‘ I would accept your Majesty’s offer,’ my father observed, ‘ but it is difficult for me to guarantee that it will reach him.’

‘ Will you give me your word of honour that you will make every effort to deliver the letter in person ? ’

‘ *Je m’engage sur mon honneur, Sire.*’

‘ That suffices. I will send for you. Are you in need of anything ? ’

‘ Of a roof for my family while I am here. Nothing else.’

‘ The duc de Trévise will do what he can.’

Mortier did, in fact, give us a room in the governor-general’s house, and gave orders that we should be furnished with provisions ; his *maître d’hôtel* even sent us wine. A few days passed in this way, after which Mortier sent an adjutant, at four o’clock one morning, to summon my father to the Kremlin.

The fire had attained terrific proportions during those days ; the scorched air, murky with smoke, was insufferably hot. Napoleon was dressed and was walking about the room, looking careworn and out of temper ; he was beginning to feel that his singed laurels would before long be frozen, and that there would be no escaping here with a jest, as in Egypt. The plan of the campaign was absurd ; except Napoleon, everybody knew it : Ney, Narbonne, Berthier, and officers of lower rank ; to all objections he had replied with the cabalistic word ‘ Moscow ’ ; in Moscow even he guessed the truth.

When my father went in, Napoleon took a sealed letter that was lying on the table, handed it to him

and said, bowing him out: 'I rely on your word of honour.'

On the envelope was written: '*A mon frère l'Empereur Alexandre.*'

The permit given to my father was still valid; it was signed by the duc de Trévisé and countersigned by the head police-master Lesseps. A few outsiders, hearing of our permit, joined us, begging my father to take them in the guise of servants or relations. An open wagonette was given us for the wounded old man, my mother and my nurse; the others walked. A few Uhlans escorted us, on horseback, as far as the Russian rearguard, on sight of which they wished us a good journey and galloped back.

A minute later the Cossacks surrounded their strange visitors and led them to the headquarters of the rearguard. There Wintzengerode and Ilovaisky the Fourth were in command. Wintzengerode, hearing of the letter, told my father that he would send him on immediately, with two dragoons, to the Tsar in Petersburg.

'What's to be done with your people?' asked the Cossack general, Ilovaisky, 'it is impossible for them to stay here. They are not out of range of the guns, and something serious may be expected any day.'

My father begged that we should, if possible, be taken to his Yaroslav estate, but incidentally observed that he had not a kopeck with him.

'We will settle up afterwards,' said Ilovaisky, 'and do not worry yourself, I give you my word to send them.'

My father was taken by couriers along a road made by laying faggots on the ground. For us Ilovaisky procured some sort of an old conveyance and sent us to the nearest town with a party of French prisoners and an escort of Cossacks; he provided us with money for our expenses until we reached Yaroslav, and altogether did everything he possibly could in the turmoil of war-time. Such was my first journey in Russia; my second

was unaccompanied by French Uhlans, Cossacks from the Ural and prisoners of war—I was alone but for a drunken gendarme sitting by my side.

My father was taken straight to Count Araktcheyev<sup>1</sup> and detained in his house. The Count asked for the letter, my father told him he had given his word of honour to deliver it in person; Araktcheyev promised to ask the Tsar, and, next day, informed him by letter that the Tsar had charged him to take the letter and to deliver it immediately. He gave a receipt for the letter (which is still preserved). For a month my father remained under arrest in Araktcheyev's house; no one was allowed to see him except S. S. Shishkov,<sup>2</sup> who came at the Tsar's command to question him concerning the details of the fire, of the enemy's entry into Moscow, and his interview with Napoleon; he was the first eye-witness to arrive in Petersburg. At last Araktcheyev informed my father that the Tsar had ordered his release, and did not hold him to blame for accepting a permit from the enemy in consideration of the extremity in which he was placed. On setting him free, Araktcheyev commanded him to leave Petersburg immediately without seeing anybody except his elder brother, to whom he was allowed to say good-bye.

On reaching at nightfall the little Yaroslav village my father found us in a peasants' hut (he had no house on that estate). I was asleep on a bench under the window; the window did not close properly, the snow drifting through the crack, covered part of the bench and lay, not thawing, on the window-sill.

Every one was in great perturbation, especially my mother. A few days before my father's arrival, the

<sup>1</sup> Minister of War and the most powerful and influential man of the reign of Alexander I., whose intimate friend he was, hated and dreaded for his cruelty.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary of State under Alexander I.—(*Translator's Notes.*)

village elder and some of the house-serfs had run hastily in the morning into the hut where she was living, trying to explain something by gestures and insisting on her following them. At that time my mother did not speak a word of Russian ; all she could make out was that the matter concerned Pavel Ivanovitch ; she did not know what to think ; the idea occurred to her that they had killed him, or that they meant to kill him\* and afterwards her. She took me in her arms, and trembling all over, more dead than alive, followed the elder. Golohvastov was in another hut, they went into it ; the old man really was lying dead beside the table at which he had been about to shave ; a sudden stroke of paralysis had cut short his life instantaneously.

My mother's position may well be imagined (she was then seventeen), living in a little grimy hut, in the midst of these half-savage bearded men, dressed in bare sheepskins, and talking in a completely unknown language ; and all this in November of the terrible winter of 1812. Her one support had been Golohvastov ; she wept day and night after his death. And meanwhile these savages were pitying her from the bottom of their hearts, showing her all their warm hospitality and good-natured simplicity ; and the village elder sent his son several times to the town to get raisins, cakes, apples, and bread rings for her.

Fifteen years later the elder was still living and used sometimes, grey as a kestrel and somewhat bald, to come to us in Moscow. My mother used specially to regale him with tea and to talk to him about the winter of 1812, saying how she had been so afraid of him and how, without understanding each other, they had made the arrangements for the funeral of Pavel Ivanovitch. The old man used still to call my mother—as he had then—Yuliza Ivanovna, instead of Luise, and used to tell how I was not at all afraid of his beard and would readily let him take me into his arms.



From the province of Yaroslav we moved to that of Tver, and at last, a year later, made our way back to Moscow. By that time my father's brother, who had been ambassador to Westphalia and had afterwards gone on some commission to Bernadotte, had returned from Sweden; he settled in the same house with us.

I still remember, as in a dream, the traces of the fire, which remained until early in the 'twenties: great burnt-out houses without window frames or roofs, tumble-down walls, empty spaces fenced in, with remains of stoves and chimneys on them.

Tales of the fire of Moscow, of the battle of Borodino, of Beresina, of the taking of Paris were my cradle-songs, my nursery stories, my Iliad and my Odyssey. My mother and our servants, my father and Vera Artamonovna were continually going back to the terrible time which had impressed them so recently, so intimately, and so acutely. Then the returning generals and officers began to arrive in Moscow. My father's old comrades of the Izmailovsky regiment, now the heroes of a bloody war scarcely ended, were often at our house. They found relief from their toils and anxieties in describing them. This was in reality the most brilliant moment of the Petersburg period; the consciousness of strength gave new life, all practical affairs and troubles seemed to be put off till the morrow when work would begin again, now all that was wanted was to revel in the joys of victory.

From these gentlemen I heard a great deal more about the war than from Vera Artamonovna. I was particularly fond of the stories told by Count Miloradovitch<sup>1</sup>; he spoke with the greatest vivacity, with lively mimicry,

<sup>1</sup> One of the generals of the campaign of 1812. Military governor-general of Petersburg at the accession of Nicholas in 1825, and killed in the rising of December 14th. See Merezhkovsky's novel, *December the Fourteenth*.—(Translator's Note.)

with roars of laughter, and more than once I fell asleep, on the sofa behind him, to the sounds of them.

Of course, in such surroundings, I was a desperate patriot and intended to go into the army ; but an exclusive sentiment of nationality never leads to any good ; it led me to the following incident. Among others who used to visit us was the Comte de Quinsonas, a French *émigré* and lieutenant-general in the Russian service. A desperate royalist, he took part in the celebrated fête of Versailles, at which the King's minions trampled underfoot the revolutionary cockade and at which Marie Antoinette drank to the destruction of the revolution. This French count, a tall, thin, graceful old man with grey hair, was the very model of politeness and elegant manners. There was a peerage awaiting him in Paris, where he had already been to congratulate Louis XVIII. on getting his berth. He had returned to Russia to dispose of his estate. Unluckily for me this most courteous of generals of all the Russian armies began speaking of the war in my presence.

'But surely you must have been fighting against us ?' I remarked with extreme naïveté.

'*Non, mon petit, non ; j'étais dans l'armée russe.*'

'What ?' said I, 'you, a Frenchman, and fighting in our army !'

My father glanced sternly at me and changed the conversation. The Count heroically set things right by saying to my father that 'he liked such patriotic sentiments.'

My father did not like them, and after the Count had gone away he gave me a terrible scolding.

'This is what comes of rushing headlong into conversation about all sorts of things you don't understand and can't understand ; it was out of fidelity to *his* king that the Count served under *our* emperor.'

I certainly did not understand that.

My father had spent twelve years abroad and his brother still longer; they tried to arrange their life in the foreign style while avoiding great expense and retaining all Russian comforts. Their life never was so arranged, either because they did not know how to manage or because the nature of a Russian landowner was stronger in them than their foreign habits. The management of their land and house was in common, the estate was undivided, an immense crowd of house-serfs peopled the lower storeys, and consequently all the conditions conducive to disorder were present.

Two nurses looked after me, one Russian and one German. Vera Artamonovna and Madame Proveau were very kind women, but it bored me to watch them all day long knitting stockings and bickering together, and so on every favourable opportunity I ran away to the half of the house occupied by my uncle, the Senator (the one who had been an ambassador), to see my one friend, his valet Calot.

I have rarely met a kinder, gentler, milder man; utterly alone in Russia, parted from all his own people, with difficulty speaking broken Russian, his devotion to me was like a woman's. I spent whole hours in his room, worried him, got in his way, did mischief, and he bore it all with a good-natured smile; cut all sorts of marvels out of cardboard for me and carved various trifles out of wood (and how I loved him for it!). In the evenings he used to bring me up picture-books from the library—the *Travels of Gmelin*<sup>1</sup> and of Pallas,<sup>2</sup> and a fat book of *The World in Pictures*, which I liked so much that I looked at it until the binding, although

<sup>1</sup> Gmelin, Johann Georg (1709-1755), a learned German who travelled in the East.

<sup>2</sup> Pallas, Peter Simon (1741-1811), German traveller and naturalist who explored the Urals, Kirghiz Steppes, Altai mountains, and parts of Siberia.—(Translator's Notes.)

of leather, gave way ; for a couple of hours at a time, Calot would show me the same pictures, repeating the same explanation for the thousandth time.

Before my birthday and my name-day Calot would lock himself up in his room, from which came the sounds of a hammer and other tools ; often he would pass along the corridor with rapid steps, every time locking his door after him, sometimes carrying a little saucepan of glue, sometimes a parcel with things wrapped up. It may well be imagined how much I longed to know what he was making ; I used to send the house-serf boys to try and find out, but Calot kept a sharp look-out. We somehow discovered, on the staircase, a little crack which looked straight into his room, but it was of no help to us ; all we could see was the upper part of the window and the portrait of Frederick II. with a huge nose and huge star, and the expression of an emaciated vulture. Two days before the event the noise would cease and the room would be opened—everything in it was as usual, except for scraps of coloured and gold paper here and there ; I would flush crimson, devoured with curiosity, but Calot, with an air of strained gravity, refused to approach the delicate subject.

I lived in agonies until the momentous day ; at five o'clock in the morning I was awake and thinking of Calot's preparations ; at eight o'clock he would himself appear in a white cravat, a white waistcoat, and a dark-blue tail-coat—with empty hands. When would it end ? Had he spoiled it ? And time passed and the ordinary presents came, and Elizaveta Alexeyevna Golohvastov's footman had already appeared with a costly toy, wrapped up in a napkin, and the Senator had already brought me some marvel, but the uneasy expectation of the surprise troubled my joy.

All at once, as it were casually, after dinner or after tea, Nurse would say to me : ' Go downstairs just a

minute; there is somebody asking for you.' At last, I thought, and went down, sliding on my hands down the banisters of the staircase. The doors into the hall were thrown open noisily, music was playing. A transparency with my monogram was lighted up, serf-boys dressed up as Turks offered me sweetmeats, then followed a puppet show or indoor fireworks. Calot, perspiring with his efforts, was with his own hands setting everything in motion.

What presents could be compared with such an entertainment! I have never been fond of things, the bump of ownership and acquisitiveness has never been developed in me at any age, and now, after the prolonged suspense, the numbers of candles, the tinsel and the smell of gunpowder! Only one thing was lacking—a comrade of my own age, but I spent all my childhood in solitude,<sup>1</sup> and certainly was not over-indulged in that respect.

My father and the Senator had another elder brother,<sup>2</sup> between whom and the two younger brothers there was an open feud, in spite of which they managed their

<sup>1</sup> My father had, besides me, another son ten years older. I was always fond of him, but he could not be a companion to me. From his twelfth to his thirtieth year he was always in the hands of the surgeons. After a series of tortures, endured with extreme fortitude and rendering his whole existence one intermittent operation, the doctors declared his disease incurable. His health was shattered; circumstances and character contributed to the complete ruin of his life. The pages in which I speak of his lonely and melancholy existence have been omitted. I do not care to print them without his consent.

<sup>2</sup> There were originally four brothers: Pyotr, the grandfather of 'the cousin from Kortcheva' mentioned in Chapter 3; Alexander, the elder brother here described, who is believed to have been the model from whom Dostoevsky drew the character of Fyodor Pavlovitch in *The Brothers Karamazov*; Lyov, always referred to as 'the Senator,' and Ivan, Herzen's father. Of the sisters one was Elizaveta Alexeyevna Golohvastov and one was Marya Alexeyevna Hovansky. The family of the Yakovlyevs was one of the oldest and most aristocratic in Russia.—(Translator's Note.)

estate in common or rather ruined it in common. The triple control and the quarrel together led to glaring disorganisation. My father and the Senator did everything to thwart the elder brother, who did the same by them. The village elders and peasants lost their heads; one brother was demanding wagons; another, hay; a third, firewood; each gave orders, each sent his authorised agents. The elder brother would appoint a village elder, the younger ones would remove him within a month, upon some nonsensical pretext, and appoint another whom their senior would not recognise. With all this, backbiting, slander, spies and favourites were naturally plentiful, and under it all the poor peasants, who found neither justice nor defence, were harassed on all sides and oppressed with the double burden of work and the impossibility of carrying out the capricious demands of their owners.

The first consequence of the feud between the brothers that made some impression upon them, was the loss of their great lawsuit with the Counts Devier, though justice was on their side. Though their interests were the same, they could never agree on a course of action; their opponents naturally profited by this. In addition to the loss of a large and fine estate, the Senate sentenced each of the brothers to pay costs and damages to the amount of 30,000 paper roubles. This lesson opened their eyes and they made up their minds to divide their property. The preliminary negotiations lasted for about a year, the estate was carved into three fairly equal parts and they were to decide by casting lots which was to come to which. The Senator and my father visited their elder brother, whom they had not seen for several years, to negotiate and be reconciled; then there was a rumour among us that he would visit us to complete the arrangements. The rumour of the visit of this elder brother excited horror and anxiety in our household.



He was one of those grotesquely original creatures who are only possible in Russia, where life is original to grotesqueness. He was a man gifted by nature, yet he spent his whole life in absurd actions, often almost crimes. He had received a fairly good education in the French style, was very well-read,—and spent his time in debauchery and empty idleness up to the day of his death. He, too, had served at first in the Izmailovsky regiment, had been something like an aide-de-camp in attendance on Potyomkin, then served on some mission, and returning to Petersburg was made chief prosecutor in the Synod. Neither diplomatic nor monastic surroundings could restrain his unbridled character. For his quarrels with the heads of the Church he was removed from his post; for a slap in the face, which he either tried to give, or gave to a gentleman at an official dinner at the governor-general's, he was banished from Petersburg. He went to his Tambov estate; there the peasants nearly murdered him for his ferocity and amorous propensities; he was indebted to his coachman and horses for his life.

After that he settled in Moscow. Deserted by all his relations and also by his acquaintances, he lived in solitude in his big house in the Tverskoy Boulevard, oppressing his house-serfs and ruining his peasants. He amassed a great library of books and collected a regular harem of serf-girls, both of which he kept under lock and key. Deprived of every occupation and concealing a passionate vanity, often extremely naïve, he amused himself by buying unnecessary things, and making still more unnecessary demands on the peasants, which he exacted with ferocity. His lawsuit concerning an Amati violin lasted thirty years, and ended in his losing it. After another lawsuit he succeeded by extraordinary efforts in winning the wall between two houses, the possession of which was of no use to him whatever. Being himself on the retired list, he used, on reading in

the newspapers of the promotions of his old colleagues, to buy such orders as had been given to them, and lay them on his table as a mournful reminder of the decorations he might have received !

His brothers and sisters were afraid of him and had nothing to do with him ; our servants would go a long way round to avoid his house for fear of meeting him, and would turn pale at the sight of him ; women went in terror of his impudent persecution, the house-serfs paid for special services of prayer that they might not come into his possession.

So this was the terrible man who was to visit us. Extraordinary excitement prevailed throughout the house from early morning ; I had never seen this legendary ' enemy-brother,' though I was born in his house, where my father stayed when he came back from foreign parts ; I longed to see him and at the same time I was frightened, I do not know why, but I was terribly frightened.

Two hours before his arrival, my father's eldest nephew, two intimate acquaintances and a good-natured stout and flabby official who was in charge of the legal business arrived. They were all sitting in silent expectation, when suddenly the butler came in, and, in a voice unlike his own, announced that the brother ' had graciously pleased to arrive.' ' Ask him up,' said the Senator, with perceptible agitation, while my father took a pinch of snuff, the nephew straightened his cravat, and the official turned aside and coughed. I was ordered to go upstairs, but trembling all over, I stayed in the next room.

Slowly and majestically the ' brother ' advanced, the Senator and my father rose to meet him. He was holding an ikon with both hands before his chest, as people do at weddings and funerals, and in a drawling voice, a little through his nose, he addressed his brothers in the following words :

‘With this ikon our father blessed me before his end, charging me and our late brother Pyotr to watch over you and to be a father to you in his place . . . if our father knew of your conduct to your elder brother ! . . .’

‘Come, *mon cher frère*,’ observed my father in his studiously indifferent voice, ‘well have you carried out our father’s last wish. It would be better to forget these memories, painful to you as well as to us.’

‘How ? what ?’ shouted the devout brother. ‘Is this what you have summoned me for . . .’ and he flung down the ikon, so that the silver setting gave a metallic clink.

At this point the Senator shouted in a voice still more terrifying. I rushed headlong upstairs and only had time to see the official and the nephew, no less scared, retreating to the balcony.

What was done and how it was done, I cannot say ; the frightened servants huddled into corners out of sight, no one knew anything of what happened, neither the Senator nor my father ever spoke of this scene before me. Little by little the noise subsided and the partition of the estate was carried out, whether then or on another day I do not remember.

My father received Vassilyevskoe, a big estate in the Ruzsky district, near Moscow. We spent the whole summer there the following year ; meanwhile the Senator bought himself a house in Arbat, and we returned to live alone in our great house, deserted and deathlike. Soon afterwards, my father too bought a house in Old Konyushenny Street.

With the Senator, in the first place, and Calot in the second, all the lively elements of our household were withdrawn. The Senator alone had prevented the hypochondriacal disposition of my father from prevailing ; now it had full sway. The new house was gloomy ; it was suggestive of a prison or a hospital ; the lower

storey was built with pillars supporting the arched ceiling, the thick walls made the windows look like the embrasures of a fortress. The house was surrounded on all sides by a courtyard unnecessarily large.

To tell the truth, it is rather a wonder that the Senator managed to live so long under the same roof as my father than that they parted. I have rarely seen two men so complete a contrast as they were.

The Senator was of a kindly disposition, and fond of amusements; he spent his whole life in the world of artificial light and of official diplomacy, the world that surrounded the court, without a notion that there was another more serious world, although he had been not merely in contact with but intimately connected with all the great events from 1789 to 1815. Count Vorontsov had sent him to Lord Grenville<sup>1</sup> to find out what General Buonaparte was going to undertake after abandoning the Egyptian army. He had been in Paris at the coronation of Napoleon. In 1811 Napoleon had ordered him to be detained in Cassel, where he was ambassador 'at the court of King Jeremiah,'<sup>2</sup> as my father used to say in moments of vexation. In fact, he took part in all the great events of his time, but in a queer way, irregularly.

Though a captain in the Life Guards of the Izmailovsky regiment, he was sent on a mission to London; Paul, seeing this in the correspondence, ordered him at once to return to Petersburg. The soldier-diplomat set off by the first ship and appeared before the 'Tsar. 'Do you want to remain in London?' Paul asked in

<sup>1</sup> British Foreign Secretary in 1791, and Prime Minister, 1806 and 1807, when the Act for the abolition of the slave trade was passed.

<sup>2</sup> *I.e.*, of Jerome Bonaparte, king of Westphalia from 1807 to 1813. 'At the court of King Jeremiah' is a popular phrase equivalent to 'in the days of Methuselah.'—(*Translator's Notes.*)

his hoarse voice. 'If it should please your Majesty to permit me,' answered the captain-diplomat.

'Go back without loss of time,' said Paul in his hoarse voice, and he did go back, without even seeing his relations, who lived in Moscow.

While diplomatic questions were being settled by bayonets and grape-shot, he was an ambassador and concluded his diplomatic career at the time of the Congress of Vienna, that bright festival of all the diplomats.

Returning to Russia he was appointed court chamberlain in Moscow, where there is no Court. Though he knew nothing of Russian Law and legal procedure, he got into the Senate, became a member of the Council of Trustees, a director of the Mariinsky Hospital, and of the Alexandrinsky Institute, and he performed all his duties with a zeal that was hardly necessary, with a censoriousness that only did harm and with an honesty that no one noticed.

He was never at home, he tired out two teams of four strong horses in the course of the day, one set in the morning, the other after dinner. Besides the Senate, the sittings of which he never neglected, and the Council of Wardens, which he attended twice a week, besides the hospital and the institute, he hardly missed a single French play, and visited the English Club three times a week. He had no time to be bored, he was always busy and interested; he was always going somewhere, and his life rolled lightly on good springs through a world of official papers and pink tape.

Moreover, up to the age of seventy-five he was as strong as a young man, was present at all the great balls and dinners, took part in every ceremonial assembly and annual function, whether it were of an agricultural or medical or fire insurance society or of the Society of Scientific Research . . . and, on the top of it all, perhaps because

of it, preserved to old age some degree of human feeling and a certain warmth of heart.

No greater contrast to the sanguine Senator, who was always in movement and only occasionally visited his home, can possibly be imagined than my father, who hardly ever went out of his courtyard, hated the whole official world and was everlastingly ill-humoured and discontented. We also had eight horses (very poor ones), but our stable was something like an almshouse for broken-down nags; my father kept them partly for the sake of appearances and partly that the two coachmen and the two postillions should have something to do, besides fetching the *Moscow News* and getting up cock-fights, which they did very successfully between the coachhouse and the neighbours' yard.

My father had scarcely been in the service at all; educated by a French tutor, in the house of a devout and highly respected aunt, he entered the Izmailovsky regiment as a sergeant at sixteen, served until the accession of Paul, and retired with the rank of captain in the Guards. In 1801 he went abroad and remained abroad until 1811, wandering from one country to another. He returned with my mother three months before my birth, and after the fire of Moscow he spent a year on his estate in the province of Tver, and then returned to live in Moscow, trying to order his life so as to be as solitary and dreary as possible. His brother's liveliness hindered him in this.

After the Senator had left us, everything in the house began to assume a more and more gloomy aspect. The walls, the furniture, the servants, everything bore a look of displeasure and suspicion, and I need hardly say that my father himself was of all the most displeased. The unnatural stillness, the whispers and cautious footsteps of the servants, did not suggest attentive solicitude, but oppression and terror. Everything was immovable in

the rooms; for five or six years the same books would lie in the very same places with the same markers in them. In my father's bedroom and study the furniture was not moved nor the windows opened for years together. When he went away into the country he took the key of his room in his pocket, that they might not venture to scrub the floor or wash the walls in his absence.



## Chapter 2

THE TALK OF NURSES AND OF GENERALS—FALSE POSITION  
—RUSSIAN ENCYCLOPAEDISTS—BOREDOM—THE MAIDS'  
ROOM AND THE SERVANTS' HALL—TWO GERMANS—  
LESSONS AND READING—THE CATECHISM  
AND THE GOSPEL

UNTIL I was ten years old I noticed nothing strange or special in my position ; it seemed to me simple and natural that I should be living in my father's house ; that in his part of it I should be on my good behaviour, while my mother lived in another part of the house, in which I could be as noisy and mischievous as I liked. The Senator spoiled me and gave me presents, Calot carried me about in his arms, Vera Artamonovna dressed me, put me to bed, and gave me my bath, Madame Proveau took me out for walks and talked to me in German ; everything went on in its regular way, yet I began pondering on things.

Stray remarks, carelessly uttered words, began to attract my attention. Old Madame Proveau and all the servants were devoted to my mother, while they feared and disliked my father. The scenes which sometimes took place between them were often the subject of conversation between Madame Proveau and Vera Artamonovna, both of whom always took my mother's side.

My mother certainly had a good deal to put up with. Being an extremely kind-hearted woman, with no strength of will, she was completely crushed by my father, and, as always happens with weak characters, put up a desperate opposition in trifling matters and things of no consequence. Unhappily, in these trifling matters, my father was nearly always in the right, and the dispute always ended in his triumph.

'If I were in the mistress's place,' Madame Proveau would say, for instance, 'I would simply go straight back

to Stuttgart; much comfort she gets—nothing but ill-humour and unpleasantness, and deadly dullness.’

‘To be sure,’ Vera Artamonovna would assent, ‘but that’s what ties her, hand and foot,’ and she would point with her knitting-needle towards me. ‘How can she take him with her—what to? And as for leaving him here alone, with our ways of going on, that would be too dreadful!’

Children in general have far more insight than is supposed, they are quickly distracted and forget for a time what has struck them, but they go back to it persistently, especially if it is anything mysterious or dreadful, and with wonderful perseverance and ingenuity they go on probing until they reach the truth.

Once on the look out, within a few weeks I had found out all the details of my father’s meeting my mother, had heard how she had brought herself to leave her parents’ home, how she had been hidden at the Senator’s in the Russian Embassy at Cassel, and had crossed the frontier, dressed as a boy; all this I found out without putting a single question to any one.

The first result of these discoveries was to estrange me from my father on account of the scenes of which I have spoken. I had seen them before, but it had seemed to me that all that was in the regular order of things; for I was so accustomed to the fact that every one in the house, not excepting the Senator, was afraid of my father and that he was given to scolding every one, that I saw nothing strange in it. Now I began to take a different view of it, and the thought that part of all this was endured on my account sometimes threw a dark oppressive cloud over my bright, childish imagination.

A second idea that took root in me from that time, was that I was far less dependent on my father than children are as a rule. I liked this feeling of independence which I imagined for myself.

Two or three years later, two of my father's old comrades in the regiment, P. K. Essen, the governor-general of Orenburg, and A. N. Bahmetyev, formerly commander in Bessarabia, a general who had lost his leg at Borodino, were sitting with my father. My room was next to the drawing-room in which they were sitting. Among other things my father told them that he had been speaking to Prince Yussupov about putting me into the service. 'There's no time to be lost,' he added; 'you know that he will have to serve for years in order to reach any grade worth speaking of.'

'What a strange idea, friend, to make him a clerk,' Essen said, good-naturedly. 'Leave it to me, and I will get him into the Ural Cossacks. We'll promote him from the ranks, that's all that matters, after that he will make his way as we all have.'

My father did not agree, he said that he had grown to dislike everything military, that he hoped in time to get me a post on some mission to a warm country, where he would go to end his days.

Bahmetyev, who had taken little part in the conversation, got up on his crutches and said: 'It seems to me that you ought to think very seriously over Pyotr Kirillovitch's advice. If you don't care to put his name down at Orenburg, you might put him down here. We are old friends and it's my way to tell you openly what I think; you will do your young man no good with the civil service and university, and you will make him of no use to society. He is quite obviously in a false position, only the military service can open a career for him and put him right. Before he reaches the command of a company, all dangerous ideas will have subsided. Military discipline is a grand schooling, his future depends on it. You say that he has abilities, but you don't mean to say that none but fools go into the army, do you? What about us and all our circle? There's only one

objection you can make—that he will have to serve a long time before he gets a commission, but it's just in that particular that we can help you.'

This conversation had as much effect as the remarks of Madame Proveau and Vera Artamonovna. By that time I was thirteen and such lessons, turned over and over, and analysed from every point of view during weeks and months of complete solitude, bore their fruit. The result of this conversation was that, although I had till then, like all boys, dreamed of the army and a uniform, and had been ready to cry at my father's wanting me to go into the civil service, my enthusiasm for soldiering suddenly cooled, and my love and tenderness for epaulettes, stripes and gold lace, was by degrees completely eradicated. My smouldering passion for the uniform had, however, one last flicker. A cousin of ours, who had been at a boarding-school in Moscow and used sometimes to spend a holiday with us, had entered the Yamburgsky regiment of Uhlans. In 1825 he came to Moscow as an ensign and stayed a few days with us. My heart throbbed when I saw him with all his little cords and laces, wearing a sword and a four-cornered helmet put on a little on one side and fastened with a chin-strap. He was a boy of seventeen and short for his age. Next morning I dressed up in his uniform, put on his sword and helmet and looked at myself in the glass. Oh dear! how handsome I thought myself in the short blue jacket with red braiding! And the pompon, and the pouch . . . what were the yellow nankeen breeches and the short camlet jacket which I used to wear at home, in comparison with these?

The cousin's visit destroyed the effect of the generals' talk, but soon circumstances turned me against the army again, and this time for good.

The spiritual result of my meditations on my 'false position' was somewhat the same as what I had deduced

from the talk of my two nurses. I felt myself more independent of society, of which I knew absolutely nothing, felt that in reality I was thrown on my own resources, and with somewhat childish conceit thought I would show the old generals what I was made of.

With all that it may well be imagined how drearily and monotonously the time passed in the strange convent-like seclusion of my father's house. I had neither encouragement nor distraction; my father had spoilt me until I was ten, and now he was almost always dissatisfied with me; I had no companions, my teachers came and went, and, seeing them out of the yard, I used to run off on the sly, to play with the house-serf boys, which was strictly forbidden. The rest of my time I spent wandering aimlessly about the big dark rooms, which had their windows shut all day and were only dimly lighted in the evening, doing nothing or reading anything that turned up.

The servants' hall and the maids' room provided the only keen enjoyment left me. There I found perfect peace and happiness; I took the side of one party against another, discussed with my friends their affairs, and gave my opinion upon them, knew all their private business, and never dropped a word in the drawing-room of the secrets of the servants' hall.

I must pause upon this subject. Indeed, I do not intend to avoid digressions and episodes; that is the way of every conversation, that is the way of life itself.

Children as a rule are fond of servants; their parents forbid them, especially in Russia, to associate with servants; the children do not obey them because it is dull in the drawing-room and lively in the maids' room. In this case, as in thousands of others, parents do not know what they are about. I cannot conceive that our servants' hall was a less wholesome place for children than our 'tea-room' or 'lounge-room.' In the servants' hall

children pick up coarse expressions and bad manners, that is true; but in the drawing-room they pick up coarse ideas and bad feelings.

The very instruction to children to hold themselves aloof from those with whom they are continually in contact is immoral.

A great deal is said among us about the complete depravity of servants, especially when they are serfs. They certainly are not distinguished by exemplary strictness of conduct, and their moral degradation can be seen from the fact that they put up with too much and are too rarely moved to indignation and resistance. But that is not the point. I should like to know what class in Russia is less depraved? Are the nobility or the officials? the clergy, perhaps?

Why do you laugh? The peasants, perhaps, are the only ones who may claim to be different. . . .

The difference between the nobleman and the serving man is very small. I hate the demagogues' flattery of the mob, particularly since the troubles of 1848, but the aristocrats' slander of the people I hate even more. By picturing servants and slaves as degraded beasts, the planters throw dust in people's eyes and stifle the voice of conscience in themselves. We are not often better than the lower classes, but we express ourselves more gently and conceal our egoism and our passions more adroitly; our desires are not so coarse, and the ease with which they are satisfied and our habit of not controlling them make them less conspicuous; we are simply wealthier and better fed and consequently more fastidious. When Count Almaviva reckoned up to the Barber of Seville the qualities he expected from a servant, Figaro observed with a sigh: 'If a servant must have all these virtues, are there many gentlemen fit to be lackeys?'

Immorality in Russia as a rule does not go deep; it is

more savage and dirty, noisy and coarse, dishevelled and shameless than profound. The clergy, shut up at home, drink and overeat themselves with the merchants. The nobility get drunk in the sight of all, play cards until they are ruined, thrash their servants, seduce their housemaids, manage their business affairs badly and their family life still worse. The officials do the same, but in a dirtier way, and in addition are guilty of grovelling before their superiors and pilfering. As far as stealing in the literal sense goes, the nobility are less guilty, they take openly what belongs to others; when it suits them, however, they are just as smart as other people. All these charming weaknesses are to be met with in a still coarser form in those who are in private and not government service, and in those who are dependent not on the Court but on the landowners. But in what way they are worse than others as a class, I do not know

Going over my remembrances, not only of the serfs of our house and of the Senator's, but also of two or three households with which we were intimate for twenty-five years, I do not remember anything particularly vicious in their behaviour. Petty thefts, perhaps, . . . but on that matter all ideas are so muddled by their position, that it is difficult to judge; *human property* does not stand on ceremony with its kith and kin, and is hail-fellow-well-met with the master's goods. It would be only fair to exclude from this generalisation the confidential servants, the favourites of both sexes, masters' mistresses and tale-bearers; but in the first place they are an exception—these Kleinmihels of the stable<sup>1</sup> and Benckendorfs<sup>2</sup> from the cellar, Perekusihins<sup>3</sup> in striped linen gowns, and bare-

<sup>1</sup> Kleinmihel, Minister of Means of Communication under Nicholas I.

<sup>2</sup> Benckendorf, Chief of Gendarmes, and favourite of Nicholas. See Merezhkovsky's *December the Fourteenth* for character-study.

<sup>3</sup> Perekusihin, Darya Savishna, favourite of Catherine II.—(Translator's Notes.)



legged Pompadours; moreover, they do behave better than any of the rest, they only get drunk at night and do not pawn their clothes at the pot-house.

The simple-hearted immorality of the rest revolves round a glass of vodka and a bottle of beer, a merry talk and a pipe, absences from home without leave, quarrels which sometimes end in fights, and sly tricks played on the masters who expect of them something inhuman and impossible. Of course, on the one hand, the lack of all education, on the other, the simplicity of the peasant in slavery have brought out a great deal that is monstrous and distorted in their manners, but for all that, like the negroes in America, they have remained half children, a trifle amuses them, a trifle distresses them; their desires are limited, and are rather naïve and human than vicious.

Vodka and tea, the tavern and the restaurant, are the two permanent passions of the Russian servant; for their sake, he steals, for their sake, he is poor, on their account, he endures persecution and punishment and leaves his family in poverty. Nothing is easier than for a Father Matthew<sup>1</sup> from the height of his teetotal intoxication to condemn drunkenness, and sitting at the tea-table, to wonder why servants go to drink tea at the restaurant, instead of drinking it at home, although at home it is cheaper.

Vodka stupefies a man, it enables him to forget himself, stimulates him and induces an artificial cheerfulness; this stupefaction and stimulation are the more agreeable the less the man is developed and the more he is bound to a narrow, empty life. How can a servant not drink when he is condemned to the everlasting waiting in the hall, to perpetual poverty, to being a slave, to being sold?

<sup>1</sup> Father Matthew (1790-1856), Irish priest, who had remarkable success in a great temperance campaign based on the religious appeal.—(*Translator's Note.*)

He drinks to excess—when he can—because he cannot drink every day; that was observed fifteen years ago by Senkovsky in the *Library of Good Reading*.<sup>1</sup> In Italy and the South of France there are no drunkards, because there is plenty of wine. The savage drunkenness of the English working man is to be explained in the same way. These men are broken in the inevitable and unequal conflict with hunger and poverty; however hard they have struggled they have met everywhere a blank wall of oppression and sullen resistance that has flung them back into the dark depths of social life, and condemned them to the never-ending, aimless toil that consumes mind and body alike. It is not surprising that after spending six days as a lever, a cogwheel, a spring, a screw, the man breaks savagely on Saturday afternoon out of the penal servitude of factory work, and in half an hour is drunk, for his exhaustion cannot stand much. The moralists would do better to drink Irish or Scotch whisky themselves and to hold their tongues, or with their inhuman philanthropy they may provoke terrible replies.

Drinking tea at the restaurant has a different significance for servants. Tea at home is not the same thing for the house-serf; at home everything reminds him that he is a servant; at home he is in the dirty servants' room, he must get the samovar himself; at home he has a cup with a broken handle, and any minute his master may ring for him. At the restaurant he is a free man, he is a gentleman; for him the table is laid and the lamps are lit; for him the waiter runs with the tray; the cup

<sup>1</sup> Senkovsky, Joseph Ivanovitch (1800-1878), of Polish origin, was a whimsical critic on the reactionary side who placed a miserable poetaster, Timofeyev, above Pushkin and preferred Le Sage to Fielding. Under the pseudonym Baron Brambæus, he wrote sensational and bombastic novels. He edited a serial publication the *Library of Good Reading*, employing poor young men of talent to write for it.—(Translator's Note.)

shines, the tea-pot glitters, he gives orders and is obeyed, he enjoys himself and gaily calls for pressed caviare or a turnover for his tea.

In all of this there is more of childish simplicity than immorality. Impressions quickly take possession of them but do not send down roots; their minds are continually occupied, or rather distracted, by casual subjects, small desires, trivial aims. A childish belief in everything marvellous turns a grown-up man into a coward, and the same childish belief comforts him in the bitterest moments. Filled with wonder, I was present at the death of two or three of my father's servants; it was then that one could judge of the simple-hearted carelessness with which their lives had passed, of the absence of great sins upon their conscience; if there were anything, it had all been settled satisfactorily with the priest.

This resemblance between servants and children accounts for their mutual attraction. Children hate the aristocratic ideas of the grown-ups and their benevolently condescending manners, because they are clever and understand that in the eyes of grown-up people they are children, while in the eyes of servants they are people. Consequently they are much fonder of playing cards or *loto* with the maids than with visitors. Visitors play for the children's benefit with condescension, give way to them, tease them and throw up the game for any excuse; the maids, as a rule, play as much for their own sakes as for the children's; and that gives the game interest.

Servants are extremely devoted to children, and this is not a slavish devotion, but the mutual affection of the weak and the simple. In old days there used to be a patriarchal dynastic affection between landowners and their serfs, such as exists even now in Turkey. To-day there are in Russia no more of those devoted servants,

attached to the race and family of their masters. And that is easy to understand. The landowner no longer believes in his power, he does not believe that he will have to answer for his serfs at the terrible Day of Judgment, but simply makes use of his power for his own advantage. The servant does not believe in his subjection and endures violence not as a chastisement and trial from God, but simply because he is defenceless; it is no use kicking against the pricks.

I used to know in my youth two or three specimens of those fanatics of slavery, of whom eighteenth-century landowners speak with a sigh, telling stories of their unflagging service and their great devotion, and forgetting to add in what way their fathers and themselves had repaid such self-sacrifice.

On one of the Senator's estates a feeble old man called Andrey Stepanov was living in peace, that is, on free rations.

He had been valet to the Senator and my father when they were serving in the Guards, and was a good, honest, and sober man, who looked into his young masters' eyes, and, to use their own words, 'guessed from them what they wanted,' which, I imagine, was not an easy task. Afterwards he looked after the estate near Moscow. Cut off from the beginning of the war of 1812 from all communication, and afterwards left alone, without money, on the ashes of a village which had been burnt to the ground, he sold some beams to escape starvation. The Senator, on his return to Russia, proceeded to set his estate in order, and going into details of the past, came to the sale of the beams. He punished his former valet by sending him away in disgrace, depriving him of his duties. The old man, burdened with a family, departed into exile. We used to stay for a day or two on the estate where Andrey Stepanov was living. The feeble old man, crippled by paralysis, used to come

every time leaning on his crutch, to pay his respects to my father and to speak to him.

The devotion and the gentleness with which he talked, his grievous appearance, the locks of yellowish grey hair on each side of his bald pate, touched me deeply. 'I have heard, master,' he said on one occasion, 'that your brother has received another decoration. I am getting old, your honour, I shall soon give up my soul to God, and yet the Lord has not vouchsafed to me to see your brother in his decorations, not even once before my end to behold his honour in his ribbons and all his finery!'

I looked at the old man, his face was so childishly candid, his bent figure, his painfully twisted face, lustreless eyes, and weak voice—all inspired confidence; he was not lying, he was not flattering, he really longed before his death to see, in 'all his ribbons and finery,' the man who could not for fifteen years forgive him the loss of a few beams. Was this a saint, or a madman? But perhaps it is only madmen who attain saintliness?

The new generation has not this idolatrous worship, and if there are cases of serfs not caring for freedom, that is simply due to indolence and material considerations. It is more depraved, there is no doubt, but it is a sign that the end is near; if they want to see anything on their master's neck, it is certainly not the Vladimir ribbon.

Here I will say something of the position of our servants in general.

Neither the Senator nor my father oppressed the house-serfs particularly, that is, they did not ill-treat them physically. The Senator was hasty and impatient, and consequently often rough and unjust, but he had so little contact with the house-serfs and took so little notice of them that they scarcely knew each other. My father wearied them with his caprices, never let pass a look, a word or a movement, and was everlastingly lecturing

them ; to a Russian this often seems worse than blows or abuse.

Corporal punishment was almost unknown in our house, and the two or three cases in which the Senator and my father resorted to the revolting method of the police station were so exceptional, that all the servants talked about it for months afterwards ; and it was only provoked by glaring offences.

More frequently house-serfs were sent for soldiers, and this punishment was a terror to all the young men ; without kith or kin, they still preferred to remain house-serfs, rather than to be in harness for twenty years. I was greatly affected by those terrible scenes. . . . Two soldiers of the police would appear at the summons of the landowner : they would stealthily, in a casual, sudden way, seize the appointed victim. The village elder commonly announced at this point that the master had the evening before ordered that he was to be taken to the recruiting-office, and the man would try through his tears to put a brave face on it, while the women wept : every one made him presents and I gave him everything I could, that is, perhaps a twenty-kopeck piece and a neck-handkerchief.

I remember, too, my father's ordering some village elder's beard to be shaved off, because he had spent the obrok<sup>1</sup> which he had collected. I did not understand this punishment, but was struck by the appearance of this old man of sixty ; he was in floods of tears, and kept bowing to the ground and begging for a fine of one hundred roubles in addition to the obrok if only he might be spared this disgrace.

When the Senator was living with us, the common household consisted of thirty men and almost as many women ; the married women, however, performed no

<sup>1</sup> Payment in money or kind by a serf in lieu of labour for his master.—(*Translator's Note.*)

service, they looked after their own families ; there were five or six maids or laundresses, who never came upstairs. To these must be added the boys and girls who were being trained in their duties, that is, in sloth and idleness, in lying and the use of vodka.

To give an idea of the life in Russia of those days, I think it will not be out of place to say a few words on the maintenance of the house-serfs. At first, they used to be given five roubles a month for food and afterwards six. The women had a rouble a month less, and children under ten had half the full allowance. The servants made up 'artels'<sup>1</sup> and did not complain of the allowance being too small, and, indeed, provisions were extraordinarily cheap in those days. The highest wage was a hundred roubles a year, while others received half that amount and some only thirty roubles. Boys under seventeen got no wages at all. In addition to their allowance, servants were given clothes, greatcoats, shirts, sheets, quilts, towels and mattresses covered with sailcloth ; boys, who did not get wages, were allowed money for their physical and moral purification, that is, for the bath-house and for preparing for communion. Taking everything into account, a servant cost three hundred roubles a year ; if to this we add a share of medicine, of a doctor and of the surplus edibles brought from the village, even then it is not over 350 roubles. This is only a quarter of the cost of a servant in Paris or London.

The planters usually take into account the insurance premium of slavery, that is, the maintenance of wife and children by the owner, and a meagre crust of bread somewhere in the village for the slave in old age. Of course this must be taken into account ; but the cost is greatly lessened by the fear of corporal punishment, the im-

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, clubs or guilds for messing or working together.—  
(Translator's Note.)



possibility of changing their position, and a much lower scale of maintenance.

I have seen enough of the way in which the terrible consciousness of serfdom destroys and poisons the existence of house-serfs, the way in which it oppresses and stupefies their souls. Peasants, especially those who pay a fixed sum in lieu of labour, have less feeling of their personal bondage; they somehow succeed in not believing in their complete slavery. But for the house-serf, sitting on a dirty locker in the hall from morning till night, or standing with a plate at table, there is no room for doubt.

Of course there are people who live in the servants' hall like fish in water, people whose souls have never awakened, who have acquired a taste for their manner of life and who perform their duties with a sort of artistic relish.

Of that class we had one extremely interesting specimen, our footman Bakay, a man of tall figure and athletic build, with solid, dignified features and an air of the greatest profundity; he lived to an advanced age, imagining that the position of a footman was one of the greatest consequence.

This worthy old man was perpetually angry or a little drunk, or angry and a little drunk at once. He took an exalted view of his duties and ascribed a serious importance to them: with a peculiar bang and crash he would throw up the steps of the carriage and slam the carriage door with a report like a pistol shot. With a gloomy air he stood up stiff and rigid behind the carriage, and every time there was a jolt over a rut he would shout in a thick and displeased voice to the coachman: 'Steady!' regardless of the fact that the rut was already five paces behind.

Apart from going out with the carriage, his chief occupation, a duty he had voluntarily undertaken, consisted of training the serf-boys in the aristocratic manners

of the servants' hall. When he was sober, things went fairly well, but when his head was a little dizzy, he became incredibly pedantic and tyrannical. I sometimes stood up for my friends, but my authority had little influence on Bakay, whose temper was of a Roman severity; he would open the door into the drawing-room for me and say: 'This is not the place for you; be pleased to leave the room or I shall carry you out.' He lost no opportunity of scolding the boys, and often added a cuff to his words, or, with his thumb and first finger, gave them a flip on the head with the sharpness and force of a spring.

When at last he had chased the boys out and was left alone, he transferred his persecution to his one friend, Macbeth, a big Newfoundland dog, whom he used to feed, comb and groom. After sitting in solitude for two or three minutes he would go out into the yard, call Macbeth to join him on the locker, and begin a conversation. 'What are you sitting out there in the yard in the frost for, stupid, when there is a warm room for you? What a beast! What are you rolling your eyes for, eh? Have you nothing to say?' Usually a slap would follow these words. Macbeth would sometimes growl at his benefactor; and then Bakay would upbraid him in earnest: 'You may go on feeding a dog, but he will still remain a dog, he will show his teeth at any one, without caring who it is . . . the fleas would have eaten him up if it had not been for me!' And offended by his friend's ingratitude he would wrathfully take a pinch of snuff and fling what was left between his fingers on Macbeth's nose. Then the dog would sneeze, clumsily brush away the snuff with his paw, and, leaving the bench indignantly, would scratch at the door; Bakay would open it with the word 'Rascal' and give him a kick as he went out. Then the boys would come back, and he would set to flipping them on the head again.

Before Macbeth, we had a setter called Berta ; she was very ill and Bakay took her on to his mattress and looked after her for two or three weeks. Early one morning I went out into the servants' hall. Bakay tried to say something to me, but his voice broke and a big tear rolled down his cheek—the dog was dead. There is a fact for the student of human nature. I do not for a moment suppose that he disliked the boys ; it was simply a case of a severe character, accentuated by drink and unconsciously moulded by the spirit of the servants' hall.

But besides these amateurs of slavery, what gloomy images of martyrs, of hopeless victims, pass mournfully before my memory.

The Senator had a cook Alexey, a sober industrious man of exceptional talent who made his way in the world. The Senator himself got him taken into the Tsar's kitchen, where there was at that time a celebrated French cook. After being trained there, he got a post in the English club, grew rich, married and lived like a gentleman ; but the bonds of serfdom would not let him sleep soundly at night, nor take pleasure in his position.

After having a service celebrated to the Iversky Madonna, Alexey plucked up his courage and presented himself before the Senator to ask for his freedom for five thousand roubles. The Senator was proud of *his* cook, just as he was proud of *his* painter, and so he would not take the money, but told the cook that he should be set free for nothing at his master's death. The cook was thunderstruck ; he grieved, grew thin and worn, turned grey and . . . being a Russian, took to drink. He neglected his work ; the English Club dismissed him. He was engaged by the Princess Trubetskoy, who worried him by her petty niggardliness. Being on one occasion extremely offended by her, Alexey, who was fond of expressing himself eloquently, said, speaking through his nose with his air of dignity : ' What a clouded soul dwells

in your illustrious body !' The princess was furious, she turned the cook away, and, as might be expected from a Russian lady, wrote a complaint to the Senator. The Senator would have done nothing to him, but, as a polite gentleman, he felt bound to send for the cook, gave him a good scolding and told him to go and beg the princess's pardon.

The cook did not go to the princess but went to the pot-house. Within a year he had lost everything from the capital he had saved up for his ransom to the last of his aprons. His wife struggled and struggled on with him, but at last went off and took a place as a nurse. Nothing was heard of him for a long time. Then the police brought Alexey in tatters and wild-looking ; he had been picked up in the street, he had no lodging, he wandered from tavern to tavern. The police insisted that his master should take him. The Senator was distressed and perhaps conscience-stricken, too ; he received him rather mildly and gave him a room. Alexey went on drinking, was noisy when he was drunk and imagined that he was composing verses ; he certainly had some imagination of an incoherent sort. We were at that time at Vassilyevskoe. The Senator, not knowing what to do with the cook, sent him there, thinking that my father would bring him to reason. But the man was too completely shattered. I saw in his case the concentrated anger and hatred against the masters which lies in the heart of the serf, and might be particularly dangerous in a cook ; he would grind his teeth and speak with malignant mimicry. He was not afraid to give full rein to his tongue in my presence ; he was fond of me and would often, patting me familiarly on the shoulders, say that I was ' a good branch of a rotten tree.'

After the Senator's death, my father gave him his freedom at once. It was too late and simply meant getting rid of him, he was ruined in any case.

Besides Alexey, I cannot help recalling another victim of serfdom. The Senator had a serf aged about five-and-thirty who acted as his secretary. My father's eldest brother, who died in 1813, had sent him as a boy to a well-known doctor to be trained as a feldsher (or doctor's assistant) that he might be of use in a village hospital which his master was intending to found. The doctor procured permission for him to attend the lectures of the Academy of Medicine and Surgery; the young man had abilities, he learned Latin, German, and something of doctoring. At five-and-twenty he fell in love with the daughter of an officer, concealed his position from her and married her. The deception could not last long. After his master's death, the wife learned with horror that they were serfs. The Senator, his new owner, did not oppress them in any way, indeed he was fond of young Tolotchanov, but the trouble with the wife persisted; she could not forgive her husband for the deception and ran away from him with another man. Tolotchanov must have been devoted to her, for from that time he sank into a melancholy that bordered upon madness, spent his nights in debauchery, and, having no means of his own, squandered his master's money. When he saw that he could not set things right, on the 31st of December 1821 he poisoned himself.

The Senator was not at home; Tolotchanov went in to my father in my presence and told him that he had come to say good-bye to him and to ask him to tell the Senator that he had spent the money that was missing.

'You are drunk,' my father told him. 'Go and sleep it off.'

'I shall soon go for a long sleep,' said the doctor, 'and I only beg you not to remember evil against me.'

Tolotchanov's tranquil air rather alarmed my father and, looking more intently at him, he asked:

'What's the matter with you, are you raving?'

'Not at all, I have only taken a wine-glassful of arsenic.'

They sent for a doctor and the police, gave him an emetic, and made him drink milk. When he was on the point of vomiting, he restrained himself and said: 'Stay there, stay there, I did not swallow you for that.'

Afterwards, when the poison began to act more freely, I heard his moans and his voice repeating in agony, 'It burns! it burns! it's fire!'

Some one advised him to send for a priest; he refused, and told Calot that there could not be a life beyond the grave, that he knew too much anatomy to believe that. At midnight he asked the doctor, in German, what time it was, then saying, 'Well, it's the new year, I wish you a happy one,' he died.

In the morning I rushed to the little lodge that served as a bath-house; Tolotchanov had been taken there; the body was lying on the table, dressed just as he had died, in a dress-coat without a cravat, with his chest open, and his features were terribly distorted and had even turned black. This was the first dead body I had seen; I went away almost fainting. And the playthings and pictures I had had given me for the New Year did not comfort me. Tolotchanov's dark-looking face hovered before my eyes and I kept hearing his 'It burns! it's fire!'

I will say only one thing more, to conclude this gloomy subject: the servants' hall had no really bad influence upon me at all. On the contrary, it awakened in me from my earliest years an invincible hatred for every form of slavery and every form of tyranny. At times when I was a child, Vera Artamonovna would say by way of the greatest rebuke for some naughtiness: 'Wait a bit, you will grow up and turn into just such another master as the rest.' I felt this a horrible insult. The old woman need not have worried herself—just such another as the rest, anyway, I have not become.

Besides the servants' hall and the maids' room I had one other distraction, and in that I was not hindered in any way. I loved reading as much as I hated lessons. My passion for unsystematic reading was, indeed, one of the chief obstacles to serious study. I never could, for instance, then or later, endure the theoretical study of languages, but I very soon learnt to understand and chatter them incorrectly, and at that stage I remained, because it was sufficient for my reading.

My father and the Senator had between them a fairly large library, consisting of French books of the eighteenth century. The books lay about in heaps in a damp, unused room in a lower storey of the Senator's house. Calot had the key. I was allowed to rummage in these literary granaries as I liked, and I read and read to my heart's content. My father saw two advantages in it, that I should learn French more quickly and that I should be occupied, that is, should sit quietly and in my own room. Besides, I did not show him all the books I read, nor lay them on the table; some of them were hidden in the sideboard.

What did I read? Novels and plays, of course. I read fifty volumes of the French and Russian drama; in every volume there were three or four plays. Besides French novels my mother had the Tales of La Fontaine and the comedies of Kotzebue, and I read them two or three times. I cannot say that the novels had much influence on me; though like all boys I pounced eagerly on all equivocal or somewhat improper scenes, they did not interest me particularly. A play which I liked beyond all measure and read over twenty times in the Russian translation, the *Marriage of Figaro*,<sup>1</sup> had

<sup>1</sup> *Le Mariage de Figaro*, a satirical comedy by Beaumarchais (né Caron, 1732-1799), a watchmaker's son, who rose to wealth and influence, and by his writings helped to bring about the Revolution. This play and an earlier one, *Le Barbier de Séville*,



much greater influence on me. I was in love with Cherubino and the Countess, and what is more, I was myself Cherubino; my heart throbbed as I read it and without myself clearly recognising it I was conscious of a new sensation. How enchanting I thought the scene in which the page is dressed up as a girl, how intensely I longed to hide somebody's ribbon in my bosom and kiss it in secret. In reality I had in those years no feminine society.

I only remember that occasionally on Sundays Bahmet-yev's two daughters used to come from their boarding-school to visit us. The younger, a girl of sixteen, was strikingly beautiful. I was overwhelmed when she entered the room and never ventured to address a word to her, but kept stealing looks at her lovely dark eyes and dark curls. I never dropped a hint on the subject and the first breath of love passed unseen by any one, even by her.

Years afterwards when I met her, my heart throbbed violently and I remembered how at twelve years old I had worshipped her beauty.

I forgot to say that *Werther* interested me almost as much as the *Marriage of Figaro*; half the novel was beyond me and I skipped it, and hurried on to the terrible *dénouement*, over which I wept like a madman. In 1839 *Werther* happened to come into my hands again; this was when I was at Vladimir and I told my wife how as a boy I had cried over it and began reading her the last letters . . . and when I came to the same passage, my tears began flowing again and I had to stop.

Up to the age of fourteen I cannot say that my father greatly restricted my liberty, but the whole atmosphere of our house was oppressive for a lively boy. The

became popular all over Europe, but are now chiefly remembered through their adaptation to operas by Mozart and Rossini.—(Translator's Note.)

persistent and unnecessary fussiness concerning my physical health, together with complete indifference to my moral well-being, was horribly wearisome. There were everlasting precautions against my taking a chill, or eating anything indigestible, and anxious solicitude over the slightest cough or cold in the head. In the winter I was kept indoors for weeks at a time, and when I was allowed to go out, it was only wearing warm high boots, thick scarves and such things. At home it was always insufferably hot from the stoves. All this would inevitably have made me a frail and delicate child but for the iron health I inherited from my mother. She by no means shared my father's prejudices, and in her half of the house allowed me everything which was forbidden in his.

My education made slow progress without emulation, encouragement, or approval; I did my lessons lazily, without method or supervision, and thought to make a good memory and lively imagination take the place of hard work. I need hardly say that there was no supervision over my teachers either; once the terms upon which they were engaged were settled, they might, so long as they turned up at the proper time and sat through their hour, go on for years without rendering any account to any one.

One of the queerest episodes of my education at that time was the engagement of the French actor Dalès to give me lessons in elocution.

'No attention is paid to it nowadays,' my father said to me, 'but my brother Alexander was every evening for six months reciting "*Le récit de Thérémène*"<sup>1</sup> with his teacher without reaching the perfection that he insisted upon.'

So I set to work at recitation.

<sup>1</sup> The famous passage in Racine's *Phèdre*. — (Translator's Note.)

‘Well, Monsieur Dalès, I expect you can give him dancing lessons as well?’ my father asked him on one occasion.

Dalès, a fat old man over sixty, who was fully aware of his own qualities, but no less fully aware of the propriety of being modest about them, replied: ‘that he could not judge of his own talents, but that he had often given advice in the ballet dances *au grand Opéra*.’

‘So I supposed,’ my father observed, offering him his open snuff-box, a civility he would never have shown to a Russian or a German teacher. ‘I should be very glad if you could *le dégourdir un peu*; after his recitation he might have a little dancing.’

‘*Monsieur le comte peut disposer de moi.*’

And my father, who was excessively fond of Paris, began recalling the foyer of the opera in 1810, the youth of George,<sup>1</sup> the declining years of Mars,<sup>2</sup> and inquiring about cafés and theatres.

Now imagine my little room, a gloomy winter evening, the windows frozen over and water dripping down a string from them, two tallow candles on the table and our tête-à-tête. On the stage, Dalès still spoke fairly naturally, but at a lesson thought it his duty to depart further from nature in his delivery. He read Racine in a sort of chant and at the cæsura made a parting such as an Englishman makes in his hair, so that each line seemed like a broken stick.

At the same time he waved his arm like a man who has fallen into the water and does not know how to swim. He made me repeat every line several times and always shook his head, saying, ‘Not right, not right at all, *attention*, “*Je crains Dieu, cher Abner*,”’ then the parting,

<sup>1</sup> Mlle. George (1787-1867), French actress famous for her performances in classical tragedy.

<sup>2</sup> Mlle. Mars (1779-1847), French actress famous for her acting in comedies of Molière.—(Translator's Notes.)

at which he would close his eyes and with a slight shake of his head, tenderly pushing away the waves with his hand, add : ‘ *et n’ai point d’autre crainte.*’

Then the old gentleman who ‘feared nothing but God’ looked at his watch, shut the book and pushed a chair towards me ; this was my partner.

Under the circumstances it was not surprising that I never learned to dance.

The lessons did not last long ; they were cut short very tragically a fortnight later.

I was at the French theatre with the Senator ; the overture was played once, then a second time and still the curtain did not rise. The front rows, wishing to show they knew their Paris, began to be noisy in the way the back rows are there. The manager came before the curtain, bowed to the right, bowed to the left, bowed straight before him, and said : ‘ We ask the kind indulgence of the audience ; a terrible calamity has befallen us, our comrade Dalès ’—and the man’s voice was actually broken by tears—‘ has been found in his room stifled by charcoal fumes.’

It was in this violent way that the fumes of a Russian stove delivered me from recitations, monologues and solo dances with my four-legged mahogany partner.

At twelve years old I was transferred from feminine to masculine hands. About that time my father made two unsuccessful attempts to engage a German to look after me.

A German who looks after children is neither a tutor nor a nurse ; it is quite a special profession. He does not teach the children and he does not dress them, but sees that they are taught and dressed, takes care of their health, goes out for walks with them and talks any nonsense to them so long as it is in German. If there is a tutor in the house, the German is under his orders ; if there is a male-nurse, he takes his orders from the

German. The visiting teachers, who come late owing to unforeseen causes and leave early owing to circumstances over which they have no control, do their best to win the German's favour, and in spite of his complete ignorance he begins to regard himself as a man of learning. Governesses employ the German in shopping for them and in all sorts of commissions, but only allow him to pay his court to them if they suffer from striking physical defects or a complete lack of other admirers. Boys of fourteen will go, without their parents' knowledge, to the German's room to smoke, and he puts up with it because he must do everything he can to remain in the house. Indeed at about that period the German is thanked, presented with a watch and discharged. If he is tired of sauntering about the streets with children and receiving reprimands for their having colds, or stains on their clothes, the 'children's German' becomes simply a German, sets up a little shop, sells amber cigarette-holders, eau-de-Cologne and cigars to his former nurslings, and carries out other secret commissions for them.<sup>1</sup>

The first German who was engaged to look after me was a native of Silesia and was called Jokisch; to my mind the surname was sufficient reason not to have engaged him. He was a tall, bald man, distinguished by an extreme lack of cleanliness; he used to boast of his knowledge of agricultural science, and I imagine it must have been on that account that my father engaged him. I looked on the Silesian giant with aversion, and the only thing that reconciled me to him was that he used, as we walked to the Dyevitchy grounds and to the Priesnensky ponds, to tell me indecent anecdotes which I repeated in the servants' hall. He stayed no more than a year; he did something disgraceful in the village and the gardener

<sup>1</sup> The organist and music-teacher, I. I. Eck, spoken of in the *Memoirs of a Young Man*, did nothing but give music-lessons and had no other influence.

tried to kill him with a scythe, so my father told him to take himself off.

He was succeeded by a Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel soldier (probably a deserter) called Fyodor Karlovitch, who was distinguished by his fine handwriting and extreme stupidity. He had been in the same position in two families before and had acquired some experience, so adopted the tone of a tutor ; moreover, he spoke French with the accent invariably on the wrong syllable.<sup>1</sup>

I had not a particle of respect for him and poisoned every moment of his existence, especially after I had convinced myself that he was incapable of understanding decimal fractions and the rule of three. As a rule there is a great deal of ruthlessness and even cruelty in boys' hearts ; with positive ferocity I persecuted the poor Wolfenbüttel *Jäger* with proportion sums ; this so interested me that I triumphantly informed my father of Fyodor Karlovitch's stupidity, though I was not given to discussing such subjects with him.

Moreover, Fyodor Karlovitch boasted to me that he had a new swallow-tail coat, dark blue with gold buttons, and I actually did see him on one occasion setting off to attend a wedding in a swallow-tail coat which was too big for him but had gold buttons. The boy whose duty it was to wait upon him informed me that he had borrowed the coat from a friend who served at the counter of a perfumery shop. Without the slightest sympathy I pestered the poor fellow to tell me where his blue dress-coat was.

'There are so many moths in your house,' he said, 'that I have left it with a tailor I know, to be taken care of.'

'Where does that tailor live ?'

'What is that to you ?'

'Why not tell me ?'

<sup>1</sup> The English speak French worse than the Germans, but they only distort the language, while the Germans degrade it.

'You needn't poke your nose into other people's business.'

'Well, perhaps not, but it is my name-day in a week, so please do get the blue coat from the tailor for that day.'

'No, I won't, you don't deserve it because you are so impertinent.'

For his final discomfiture Fyodor Karlovitch must needs one day brag before Bouchot, my French teacher, of having been a recruit at Waterloo, and of the Germans having given the French a terrible thrashing. Bouchot merely stared at him and took a pinch of snuff with such a terrible air that the conqueror of Napoleon was a good deal disconcerted. Bouchot walked off leaning angrily on his gnarled stick and never referred to him afterwards except as '*le soldat de Villainton*.' I did not know at the time that this pun was perpetrated by Béranger and could not boast of having sprung from Bouchot's fertile fancy.

At last Blücher's companion in arms had some quarrel with my father and left our house; after that my father did not worry me with any more Germans.

While our Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel friend held the field I sometimes used to visit some boys with whom a friend of his lived, also in the capacity of a German; and with these boys we used to take long walks; after his departure I was left again in complete solitude. I was bored, struggled to get out of it, and found no means of escape. As I had no chance of overriding my father's will I might perhaps have been broken in to this existence, if a new intellectual interest and two meetings, of which I will speak in the following chapter, had not soon afterwards saved me. I am quite certain that my father had not the faintest notion what sort of life he was forcing upon me, or he would not have thwarted me in the most innocent desires, nor have refused me the most natural requests.



Sometimes he allowed me to go with the Senator to the French theatre, and this was the greatest enjoyment for me; I was passionately fond of seeing acting, but this pleasure brought me as much pain as joy. The Senator used to arrive with me when the play was half over, and as he invariably had an invitation for the evening, would drag me away before the end. The theatre was in Apraxin's House, at Arbatsky Gate, and we lived in Old Konyushenny Street, that is very close by, but my father sternly forbade my returning without the Senator.

I was about fifteen when my father engaged a priest to give me Scripture lessons, so far as was necessary for entering the University. The Catechism came into my hands after I had read Voltaire. Nowhere does religion play so modest a part in education as in Russia, and that, of course, is a great piece of good fortune. A priest is always paid half-price for lessons in religion, and, indeed, if the same priest gives Latin lessons also, he is paid more for them than for teaching the Catechism.

My father regarded religion as among the essential belongings of a well-bred man; he used to say that one must believe in the 'Holy Scriptures' without criticism, because you could do nothing in that domain with reason, and all intellectual considerations merely obscured the subject; that one must observe the rites of the religion in which one was born, without, however, giving way to excessive devoutness, which was all right for old women, but not proper in men. Did he himself believe? I imagine that he did believe a little, from habit, from regard for propriety, and from a desire to be on the safe side. He did not himself, however, take part in any church observances, sheltering himself behind the delicate state of his health. He scarcely ever received a priest, at most he would ask him to perform a service in the empty drawing-room and would send him there

five roubles. In the winter he excused himself on the plea that the priest and the deacon always brought such chilliness with them that he invariably caught cold. In the country he used to go to church and receive the priest, but rather with a view to secular affairs than religious considerations. My mother was a Lutheran and therefore one degree more religious; on one or two Sundays in every month she would drive to her church, or as Bakay persisted in calling it, to 'her kirche,' and, having nothing better to do, I went with her. There I learned to mimic the German pastors, their declamation and verbosity with artistic finish, and I retained the talent in riper years.

Every year my father commanded me to fast, confess, and take the sacrament. I was afraid of confession, and the church *mise en scène* altogether impressed and alarmed me. With genuine awe I went up to take the sacrament, but I cannot call it a religious feeling, it was the awe which is inspired by everything incomprehensible and mysterious, especially when a grave and solemn significance is attributed to it; casting spells and telling fortunes affect one in the same way. I took the sacrament after matins in Holy Week, and, after devouring eggs coloured red and Easter cakes, I thought no more of religion for the rest of the year.

But I used to read the Gospel a great deal and with love, both in the Slavonic and in the Lutheran translation. I read it without any guidance, and, though I did not understand everything, I felt a deep and genuine respect for what I read. In my early youth I was often influenced by Voltairianism, and was fond of irony and mockery, but I do not remember that I ever took the Gospel in my hand with a cold feeling; and it has been the same with me all my life; at all ages and under various circumstances I have gone back to reading the Gospel, and every time its words have brought peace and gentleness to my soul.

When the priest began giving me lessons he was surprised to find not only that I had a general knowledge of the Gospel but that I could quote texts, word for word ; ' but the Lord God,' he said, ' though He has opened his mind, had not yet opened his heart.' And my theologian, shrugging his shoulders, marvelled at my ' double nature,' but was pleased with me, thinking that I should be able to pass my examination.

Soon a religion of a different sort took possession of my soul.

## Chapter 3

THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER I. AND THE FOURTEENTH  
OF DECEMBER—MORAL AWAKENING—THE TERRORIST  
BOUCHOT—MY KORTCHEVA COUSIN

ONE winter morning the Senator arrived not at the time he usually visited us ; looking anxious, he went with hurried footsteps into my father's study and closed the door, motioning me to remain in the drawing-room.

Luckily I had not long to rack my brains guessing what was the matter. The door of the servants' hall opened a little way and a red face, half-hidden in the wolf-fur of a livery overcoat, called me in a whisper ; it was the Senator's footman. I rushed to the door.

' Haven't you heard ? ' he asked.

' What ? '

' The Tsar has just died at Taganrog.'

The news impressed me ; I had never thought of the possibility of the Tsar's death ; I had grown up with a great respect for Alexander, and recalled mournfully how I had seen him not long before in Moscow. When we were out walking, we had met him beyond the Tverskoy Gate ; he was quietly riding along with two or three generals, returning from Hodynki, where there had been a review. His face was gracious, his features soft and rounded, his expression tired and melancholy. When he was on a level with us, I raised my hat, he bowed to me, smiling. What a contrast to Nicholas, who always looked like a slightly bald Medusa with cropped hair and moustaches. In the street, at the court, with his children and ministers, with his couriers and maids of honour, he was incessantly trying whether his eyes had the power of a rattlesnake, of freezing the blood in the veins.<sup>1</sup> If

<sup>1</sup> The story is told that on one occasion in his own household, in the presence, that is, of two or three heads of the secret police, two

Alexander's external gentleness was assumed, surely such hypocrisy is better than the naked shamelessness of despotism.

While vague ideas floated through my mind, while portraits of the new Emperor Constantine were sold in the shops, while appeals to take the oath of allegiance were being delivered, and good people were hastening to do so, rumours were suddenly afloat that the Tsarevitch had refused the crown. Then that same footman of the Senator's, who was greatly interested in political news and had a fine field for gathering it—in all the public offices and vestibules of senators, to one or other of which he was always driving from morning to night, for he did not share the privilege of the horses, who were changed after dinner—informed me that there had been rioting in Petersburg and that cannons were being fired in Galerny Street.

On the following evening Count Komarovsky, a general of the gendarmes, was with us : he told us of the troops in St. Isaac's Square, of the Horse Guards' attack, of the death of Count Miloradovitch.

Then followed arrests ; 'so-and-so has been taken,' 'so-and-so has been seized,' 'so-and-so has been brought up from the country' ; terrified parents trembled for their children. The sky was overcast with gloomy storm-clouds.

In the reign of Alexander political punishments were or three maids of honour and generals in waiting, he tried his Medusa glance on his daughter Marya Nikolayevna. She is like her father, and her eyes really do recall the terrible look in his. The daughter boldly confronted her father's stare. The Tsar turned pale, his cheeks twitched, and his eyes grew still more ferocious ; his daughter met him with the same look in hers. Every one turned pale and trembled ; the maids of honour and the generals in waiting dared not breathe, so panic-stricken were they at this cannibalistic imperial duel with the eyes, in the style of that described by Byron in 'Don Juan.' Nicholas got up, he felt that he had met his match.

rare; the Tsar did, it is true, banish Pushkin for his verses and Labzin for having, when he was secretary, proposed to elect a coachman, called Ilya Baykov, a member of the Academy of Arts<sup>1</sup>; but there was no systematic persecution. The secret police had not yet grown into an independent body of gendarmes, but consisted of a department under the control of De Sanglain, an old Voltairian, a wit, a great talker, and a humorist in the style of Jouy.<sup>2</sup> Under Nicholas, this gentleman himself was under the supervision of the police and he was considered a liberal, though he was exactly what he had always been; from this fact alone, it is easy to judge of the difference between the two reigns.

Nicholas was completely unknown until he came to the throne; in the reign of Alexander he was of no consequence, and no one was interested in him. Now every one rushed to inquire about him; no one could answer questions but the officers of the Guards; they hated him for his cold cruelty, his petty fussiness and his vindictiveness. One of the first anecdotes that went the round of the town confirmed the officers' opinion of him. The story was that at some drill or other the Grand Duke had so far forgotten himself as to try and take an officer by the collar. The officer responded with the words: 'Your Highness, my sword is in my

<sup>1</sup> The President of the Academy proposed Araktcheyev as an honorary member. Labzin asked in what the Count's services to the arts consisted. The President was at a loss and answered that Araktcheyev was the man who stood nearest to the Tsar. 'If that is a sufficient reason, then I propose his coachman, Ilya Baykov,' observed the secretary, 'he not only stands near the Tsar, but sits in front of him.' Labzin was a mystic and the editor of the *Messenger of Zion*; Alexander himself was a mystic of the same sort, but with the fall of Golitsyn's ministry he handed over his former 'brethren of Christ and of the inner man' to Araktcheyev to do with as he pleased. Labzin was banished to Simbirsk.

<sup>2</sup> Victor Joseph Étienne de Jouy, a popular French writer (1764-1846).—(Translator's Note.)

hand.' Nicholas drew back, said nothing, but never forgot the answer. After the Fourteenth of December he made inquiries on two occasions as to whether this officer was implicated. Fortunately he was not.<sup>1</sup>

The tone of society changed before one's eyes; the rapid deterioration in morals was a melancholy proof of how little the sense of personal dignity was developed among Russian aristocrats. Nobody (except women) dared show sympathy, dared utter a warm word about relations or friends, whose hands had been shaken only the day before they had been carried off at night by the police. On the contrary, there were savage fanatics for slavery, some from abjectness, others, worse still, from disinterested motives.

Women alone did not take part in this shameful abandonment of those who were near and dear . . . and women alone stood at the Cross too, and at the blood-stained guillotine there stood, first, Lucile Desmoulins,<sup>2</sup> that Ophelia of the Revolution, always beside the axe, waiting for her turn, and later, George Sand, who gave

<sup>1</sup> The officer, if I am not mistaken, Count Samoylov, had left the army and was living quietly in Moscow. Nicholas recognised him at the theatre; fancied that he was dressed with rather elaborate originality, and expressed the royal desire that such costumes should be ridiculed on the stage. The theatre director and patriot, Zagoskin, commissioned one of his actors to represent Samoylov in some vaudeville. The rumour of this was soon all over the town. When the performance was over, the real Samoylov went into the director's box and asked permission to say a few words to his double. The director was frightened, but, afraid of a scene, summoned the actor. 'You have acted me very well,' the Count said to him, 'and the only thing wanting to complete the likeness is this diamond which I always wear; allow me to hand it over to you; you will wear it next time you are ordered to represent me.' After this Samoylov calmly returned to his seat. The stupid jest at his expense fell as flat as the proclamation that Tchaadayev was mad and other august freaks.

<sup>2</sup> Wife of Camille Desmoulins, who at his execution appealed to the crowd, was arrested and also executed in 1794.—(*Translator's Note.*)



the hand of sympathy and friendship on the scaffold to the youthful fanatic Alibaud.<sup>1</sup>

The wives of men, exiled to hard labour, lost their civil rights, abandoned wealth and social position, and went to a lifetime of bondage in the terrible climate of Eastern Siberia, under the still more terrible yoke of the police there. Sisters, who had not the right to go with their brothers, withdrew from court, and many left Russia; almost all of them kept a feeling of love for the victims alive in their hearts; but there was no such love in the men, terror consumed it in their hearts, not one of them dared mention the luckless exiles.

While I am touching on the subject, I cannot forbear saying a few words about one of those heroic stories, of which very little has been heard. A young French governess was living in the old-fashioned family of the Ivashevs. Ivashev's son and heir wanted to marry her. This drove all his relations frantic; there was an uproar, tears, petitions. The French girl had not the support of a brother like Tchernov, who on his sister's behalf killed Novosiltsov and was killed by him in a duel. She was persuaded to leave Petersburg, and he to put off for a time his design of marrying her. Ivashev was one of the more active conspirators and he was sentenced to penal servitude for life. His relations did not succeed in saving him from the *mésalliance*. As soon as the dreadful news reached the young girl in Paris, she set off for Petersburg and asked permission to go to the province of Irkutsk to join her betrothed. Benckendorf tried to dissuade her from this criminal intention; he did not succeed and reported the matter to Nicholas. The Tsar directed that the position of women who did not desert their exiled husbands should be explained to her, adding that he would not prevent her going, but that she must

<sup>1</sup> Alibaud attempted to assassinate Louis-Philippe in 1836.—  
(Translator's Note.)

know that, if wives who went to Siberia from fidelity to their husbands deserved some indulgence, she had not the slightest right to any since she was wilfully entering into marriage with a criminal. Nicholas and she both kept their word, she went to Siberia, and he did nothing to alleviate her fate.

‘The Monarch though severe was just.’<sup>1</sup>

In the prison nothing was known of the permission given her, and when the poor girl arrived she had, while a correspondence was carried on with the authorities in Petersburg, to wait in a little settlement inhabited by all sorts of former criminals, with no means of finding out anything about Ivashev or communicating with him.

By degrees she became acquainted with her new companions. Among them was an exiled robber who worked in the prison; she told him her story. Next day the robber brought her a note from Ivashev. A day later he offered to bring her notes from Ivashev and to take her letters to him. He had to work in the prison from morning till evening; at nightfall he would take Ivashev’s letter and would set off with it regardless of snowstorms and fatigue, and return to his work at dawn.<sup>2</sup>

At last the permission came and they were married. A few years later penal servitude was exchanged for a settlement. Their position was somewhat better, but

<sup>1</sup> Line from Pushkin’s poem, ‘The Tsar Nikita.’—(*Translator’s Note.*)

<sup>2</sup> People, who knew the Ivashevs well, have since told me that they doubt this story of the robber, and that, in speaking of the return of the children and of the brother’s sympathy, I must not omit to mention the noble conduct of Ivashev’s sisters. I heard the details from one of them, Mme. Yazykov, who visited her brother in Siberia. But whether she told me about the robber, I don’t remember. Has not Mme. Ivashev been mixed up with Princess Trubetskoy, who sent letters and money to Prince Obolensky through an unknown sectary? Have Ivashev’s letters been preserved? It seems to us that we ought to have access to them.

their strength was exhausted; the wife was the first to sink under the weight of all she had gone through. She faded away as a flower of southern lands must fade in the Siberian snows. Ivashev did not survive her, he actually died a year later, but before then he had left this sphere; his letters (which made some impression on the Third Section<sup>1</sup>) bear the traces of an infinitely mournful, holy madness and gloomy poetry; he was not really living after her death, but slowly and solemnly dying. This chronicle does not end with his death. After Ivashev's exile his father made over his estate to his illegitimate son, begging him to help his poor brother and not to forget him. The exiles left two little boys, helpless, fatherless and motherless, who had neither name nor rights and seemed likely to become cantonists<sup>2</sup> and settlers in Siberia. Ivashev's brother entreated Nicholas for permission to take the children. Nicholas granted permission. A few years later he risked another petition, he moved heaven and earth for their father's name to be restored to them; and in this too he was successful.

The accounts of the rising and of the trial of the leaders, and the horror in Moscow, made a deep impression on me; a new world which became more and more the centre of my moral existence was revealed to me. I do not know how it came to pass, but though I had no understanding, or only a very dim one, of what it all meant, I felt that I was not on the same side as the grapeshot and victory, prisons and chains. The execution of Pestel,<sup>3</sup> and his associates finally dissipated the childish dream of my soul.

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, the secret police.

<sup>2</sup> 'Cantonists' were soldiers' sons educated at the government expense and afterwards sent into the army.—(*Translator's Notes.*)

<sup>3</sup> Pestel, leader of the officers in the Southern Army who supported the attempt to overthrow the autocracy and establish

Every one expected some mitigation of the sentence on the condemned men, the coronation was about to take place. Even my father, in spite of his caution and his scepticism, said that the death penalty would not be carried out, and that all this was done merely to impress people. But, like every one else, he knew little of the youthful monarch. Nicholas left Petersburg, and, without visiting Moscow, stopped at the Petrovsky Palace. . . . The citizens of Moscow could scarcely believe their eyes when they read in the *Moscow News* of the terrible event of the fourteenth of July.

The Russian people had become unaccustomed to the death penalty; since the days of Mirovitch,<sup>1</sup> who was executed instead of Catherine II., and of Pugatchov<sup>2</sup> and his companions, there had been no executions; men had died under the knout, soldiers had run the gauntlet (contrary to the law) until they fell dead, but the death penalty *de jure* did not exist. The story is told that in the reign of Paul there was some partial rising of the Cossacks on the Don in which two officers were implicated. Paul ordered them to be tried by court martial, and gave the hetman or general full authority. The court condemned them to death, but no one dared to confirm the sentence; the hetman submitted the matter to the Tsar. 'They are a pack of women,' said Paul; 'they want to throw the execution on me, very much obliged to them,' and he commuted the sentence to penal servitude.

constitutional government. The other four who were hanged were Ryleyev, Kahovsky, Bestuzhev-Ryumin, and Muravyov-Apostol. See Merezhkovsky's novel, *December the Fourteenth*, which adheres very closely to the historical facts.

<sup>1</sup> Mirovitch in 1762 tried to rescue from the Schlüsselburg the legitimate heir to the Russian throne, known as Ivan VI., who perished in the attempt. It is said that Catherine had given orders that he was to be murdered if any attempt were made to release him. Mirovitch was beheaded.

<sup>2</sup> Pugatchov, the Cossack leader of the great rising of the serfs in 1775.—(Translator's Notes.)

Nicholas re-introduced the death penalty into our criminal proceedings, at first illegally, but afterwards he included it in the Code.

The day after receiving the terrible news there was a religious service in the Kremlin.<sup>1</sup> After celebrating the execution Nicholas made his triumphal entry into Moscow. I saw him then for the first time; he was on horseback riding beside a carriage in which the two empresses, his wife and Alexander's widow, were sitting. He was handsome, but there was a coldness about his looks; no face could have more mercilessly betrayed the character of the man than his. The sharply retreating forehead and the lower jaw developed at the expense of the skull were expressive of iron will and feeble intelligence, rather of cruelty than of sensuality; but the chief point in the face was the eyes, which were entirely without warmth, without a trace of mercy, wintry eyes. I do not believe that he ever passionately loved any woman, as Paul loved Anna Lopuhin,<sup>2</sup> and as Alexander loved all women except his wife; 'he was favourably disposed to them,' nothing more.

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas's victory over the Five was celebrated by a religious service in Moscow. In the midst of the Kremlin the Metropolitan Filaret thanked God for the murders. The whole of the Royal Family took part in the service, near them the Senate and the ministers, and in the immense space around packed masses of the Guards knelt bareheaded, and also took part in the prayers; cannon thundered from the heights of the Kremlin. Never have the gallows been celebrated with such pomp; Nicholas knew the importance of the victory!

I was present at that service, a boy of fourteen lost in the crowd, and on the spot, before that altar defiled by bloody rites, I swore to avenge the murdered men, and dedicated myself to the struggle with that throne, with that altar, with those cannons. I have not avenged them, the Guards and the throne, the altar and the cannon all remain, but for thirty years I have stood under that flag and have never once deserted it.—(*Polar Star*, 1855.)

<sup>2</sup> Paul's mistress, the daughter of Lopuhin, the chief of the Moscow Police, better known under her married name as Princess Gagarin.—(*Translator's Note*.)

In the Vatican there is a new gallery in which Pius VII., I believe, has placed an immense number of statues, busts, and statuettes, dug up in Rome and its environs. The whole history of the decline of Rome is there expressed in eyebrows, lips, foreheads; from the daughters of Augustus down to Poppaea, the matrons have succeeded in transforming themselves into cocottes, and the type of cocotte is predominant and persists; the masculine type, surpassing itself, so to speak, in Antinous and Hermaphroditus, divides into two. On one hand there is sensual and moral degradation, low brows and features defiled by vice and gluttony, bloodshed and every wickedness in the world, petty as in the hetaira Heliogabalus, or with sunken cheeks like Galba; the last type is wonderfully reproduced in the King of Naples. . . . But there is another—the type of military commander in whom everything social and moral, everything human has died out, and there is left nothing but the passion for domination; the mind is narrow and there is no heart at all; they are the monks of the love of power; force and austere will is manifest in their features. Such were the Emperors of the Praetorian Guard and of the army, whom the turbulent legionaries raised to power for an hour. Among their number I found many heads that recalled Nicholas before he wore a moustache. I understand the necessity for these grim and inflexible guards beside what is dying in frenzy, but what use are they to what is youthful and growing?

In spite of the fact that political dreams absorbed me day and night, my ideas were not distinguished by any peculiar insight; they were so confused that I actually imagined that the object of the Petersburg rising was, among other things, to put the Tsarevitch Constantine on the throne, while limiting his power. This led to my being devoted for a whole year to that eccentric creature. He was at that time more popular than

Nicholas; for what reason I do not know, but the masses, or whom he had never done anything good, and the soldiers, to whom he had done nothing but harm, loved him. I well remember how during the coronation he walked beside the pale-faced Nicholas with scowling, light-yellow, bushy eyebrows, a bent figure with the shoulders hunched up to the ears, wearing the uniform of the Lettish Guards with a yellow collar. After giving away the bride at the wedding of Nicholas with Russia, he went away to complete the disaffection of Warsaw. Nothing more was heard of him until the 29th of November 1830.<sup>1</sup>

My hero was not handsome and you could not find such type in the Vatican. I should have called it the Gatchina type, if I had not seen the King of Sardinia.

I need hardly say that now solitude weighed upon me more than ever, for I longed to communicate my ideas and my dreams to some one, to test them and to hear them confirmed; I was too proudly conscious of being 'ill-intentioned' to say nothing about it, or to speak of it indiscriminately. My first choice of a confidant was my Russian tutor.

I. E. Protopopov was full of that vague and generous liberalism which often passes away with the first grey hair, with marriage and a post, but yet does ennoble a man. My teacher was touched, and as he was taking leave embraced me with the words: 'God grant that these feelings may take root and grow stronger in you.' His sympathy was a great comfort to me. After this he began bringing me much-dog's-eared manuscript copies in small handwriting of Pushkin's poems, the 'Ode to Freedom,' 'The Dagger,' 'Ryleyev's Reverie.' I used to copy them in secret . . . (and now I print them openly!).

<sup>1</sup> The date when the Polish rebellion broke out.—(*Translator's Note.*)



Of course, my reading, too, took a different turn. Politics was now in the foreground, and above all the history of the Revolution, of which I knew nothing except from Madame Proveau's tales. In the library in the basement I discovered a history of the 'nineties written by a Royalist. It was so partial that even at fourteen I did not believe it. I happened to hear from old Bouchot that he had been in Paris during the Revolution, and I longed to question him ; but Bouchot was a stern and forbidding man with an immense nose and spectacles ; he never indulged in superfluous conversation, he conjugated verbs, dictated copies, scolded me and went away, leaning on his thick gnarled stick.

'Why did they execute Louis xvi.?' I asked him in the middle of a lesson.

The old man looked at me, frowning with one grey eyebrow and lifting the other, pushed his spectacles up on his forehead like a visor, pulled out a large blue handkerchief and, blowing his nose with dignity, said : *'Parce qu'il a été traître à la patrie.'*

'If you had been one of the judges, would you have signed the death sentence?'

'With both hands.'

This lesson was of more value to me than all the subjunctives ; it was enough for me ; it was clear that the king deserved to be executed.

Old Bouchot did not like me and thought me empty-headed and mischievous, because I did not prepare my lessons properly, and he often used to say 'you'll come to no good,' but when he noticed my sympathy with his regicide ideas, he began to be gracious instead of being cross, forgave my mistakes and used to tell me episodes of the year '93, and how he had left France, when 'the dissolute and the dishonest' got the upper hand. He would finish the lesson with the same dignity, without a smile, but now he would say indulgently : 'I really

did think that you were coming to no good, but your generous feelings will be your salvation.'

To this encouragement and sympathy from my teacher was soon added a warmer sympathy which had more influence on me.

The granddaughter<sup>1</sup> of my father's eldest brother was living in a little town in the province of Tver. I had known her from my earliest childhood, but we rarely met; she used to come once a year for Christmas or for Carnival to stay at Moscow with her aunt. Nevertheless, we became friends. She was five years older than I, but so small and young-looking that she might have been taken for the same age. What I particularly liked her for was that she was the first person who treated me as a human being, that is, did not continually express surprise at my having grown, ask me what lessons I was doing, and whether I was good at them, and whether I wanted to go into the army and into what regiment, but talked to me as people in general talk to each other; though she retained that tone of authority which girls like to assume with boys who are a little younger than themselves. We had written to each other and after 1824 fairly often, but letters again mean pens and paper, again the schoolroom table with its blots and pictures carved with a penknife; I longed to see her, to talk to her about my new ideas, and so it may be imagined with what joy I heard that my cousin was coming in February (1826), and would stay with us for some months. I scratched on my table the days of the month until her arrival and blotted them out as they passed, sometimes intentionally forgetting three days so as to have the pleasure of blotting out rather more at once, and yet the time dragged on very slowly; then the time fixed had passed

<sup>1</sup> Tatyana Kutchin, known in Russian literature under her married name, Passek. She wrote *Memoirs*, which throw interesting sidelights on Herzen's narrative.—(Translator's Note.)

and her coming was deferred until a later date, and that passed, as it always does.

I was sitting one evening with my tutor Protopopov in my schoolroom, and he as usual, taking a sip of fizzing kvass after every sentence, was talking of the hexameter, horribly with voice and hand chopping up every line of Gnyeditch's *Iliad* at the cæsura, when all of a sudden the snow in the yard crunched with a different sound from that made by town sledges, the tied-up bell gave the relic of a tinkle, there was talk in the yard. . . . I flushed crimson, I had no more thought for the measured wrath of 'Achilles, son of Peleus'; I rushed headlong to the hall and my cousin from Tver, wrapped in fur coats, shawls, and scarves, wearing a bonnet and fluffy white high boots, red with the frost and, perhaps, with joy, rushed to kiss me.

People usually talk of their early childhood, of its griefs and joys with a smile of condescension, as though, like Sofya Pavlovna in *Woe from Wit*, they would say with a grimace: 'Childishness!' As though they had grown better in later years, as though their feelings were keener or deeper. Within three years children are ashamed of their playthings—let them be, they long to be grown-up, they grow and change so rapidly, they see that from their jackets and the pages of their school-books; but one would have thought grown-up people might understand that childhood together with two or three years of youth is the fullest, most exquisite part of life, the part that is most our own, and, indeed, almost the most important, for it imperceptibly shapes our future.

So long as a man is advancing with discreet footsteps forward, without stopping or taking thought, so long as he does not come to a precipice or break his neck, he imagines that his life lies before him, looks down on the past and does not know how to appreciate the present. But when experience has crushed the flowers of spring

and the flush of summer has cooled, when he begins to suspect that his life is practically over, though its continuation remains, then he turns with different feelings to the bright, warm, lovely memories of early youth.

Nature with her everlasting snares and economic devices *gives* man youth, but *takes* the formed man for herself; she draws him on, entangles him in a web of social and family relations, three-fourths of which are independent of his will; he, of course, gives his personal character to his actions, but he belongs to himself far less than in youth; the lyrical element of the personality is feebler and therefore also the power of enjoyment—everything is weaker, except the mind and the will.

My cousin's life was not a bed of roses. Her mother she lost when she was a baby. Her father was a desperate gambler, and, like all who have gambling in their blood, he was a dozen times reduced to poverty and a dozen times rich again, and ended all the same by completely ruining himself. *Les beaux restes* of his property he devoted to a stud-farm on which he concentrated all his thoughts and feelings. His son, an ensign in the Uhlans, my cousin's only brother and a very good-natured youth, was going the straight road to ruin; at nineteen he was already a more passionate gambler than his father.

At fifty, the father, for no reason at all, married an old maid who had been a pupil in the Smolny Convent.<sup>1</sup> Such a complete, perfect type of the Petersburg boarding-school miss it has never been my lot to meet. She had been one of the best pupils, and afterwards had become *dame de classe* in the school; thin, fair, and short-sighted, she had something didactic and edifying about her very appearance. Not at all stupid, she was full of an icy enthusiasm in words, talked in hackneyed phrases of virtue and devotion, knew chronology and geography

<sup>1</sup> Originally a convent, this was a famous girls' school founded by Catherine II.—(Translator's Note.)

by heart, spoke French with a revolting correctness and concealed an inner vanity which was like an artificial Jesuitical modesty. In addition to these traits of the 'seminarists in yellow shawls' she had others which were purely Nevsky or Smolny characteristics. She used to raise her eyes full of tears to heaven, as she spoke of the visits of their common mother (the Empress Maria Fyodorovna), was in love with the Emperor Alexander, and, I remember, used to wear a locket, or a signet ring, with a scrap of a letter from the Empress Elizabeth in it, '*Il a repris son sourire de bienveillance !*'

The reader can picture the harmonious trio: the father, a gambler, passionately devoted to horses, gypsies, noise, carousals, races, and trotting matches; the daughter brought up in complete independence, accustomed to do what she liked in the house; and the learned lady who, from an elderly schoolmistress, had been turned into a young wife. Of course, she did not like her stepdaughter, and of course her stepdaughter did not like her; as a rule great affection can only exist between women of five-and-thirty and girls of seventeen when the former, with resolute self-sacrifice, determine to have no sex.

I am not at all surprised at the common hostility between stepdaughters and stepmothers, it is natural and it is right. The new person put into the mother's place excites aversion in the children, the second marriage is for them like a second funeral. The children's love is vividly expressed in this feeling, it whispers to the orphans: 'Your father's wife is not your mother.' At first Christianity understood that with the conception of marriage which it developed, with the immortality of the soul which it preached, a second marriage was altogether incongruous; but, making continual concessions to the world, the Church compromised with its principles and was confronted with the implacable logic of life, with

the simple childish heart that in practice revolts against the pious incongruity of regarding its father's companion as its mother.

On her side, too, the woman who comes to her new home from church and finds a family, children awaiting her, is in an awkward position; she has nothing to do with them, she must affect feelings which she cannot have, she must persuade herself and others that another woman's children are as dear to her as her own.

And therefore I do not in the least blame the lady from the convent nor my cousin for their mutual dislike, but I understand how the young girl, unaccustomed to discipline, was fretting to escape anywhere out of the parental home. Her father was beginning to get old and was more and more under the thumb of his learned wife. Her brother, the Uhlan, was going from bad to worse, and, in fact, life was not pleasant at home, and at last she persuaded her stepmother to let her come for some months, possibly even for a year, to us.

The day after her arrival my cousin turned the whole order of my life, except my lessons, upside down, arbitrarily fixed hours for our reading together, advised me not to read novels, but recommended Ségur's *Universal History* and the *Travels of Anacharsis*. Her stoical ideals led her to oppose my marked inclination for smoking in secret, which I did by wrapping the tobacco in paper (cigarettes did not exist in those days); she liked preaching morality to me in general, and if I did not obey her teaching, at least I listened meekly. Luckily she could not keep up to her own standards, and, forgetting her rules, she read Zschokke's <sup>1</sup> tales with me instead of

<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Zschokke (1771-1848), wrote in German *Tales of Swiss Life*, in five vols., and also dramas—as well as a religious work *Stunden der Andacht*, in eight vols., which was widely read up to the middle of the nineteenth century and attacked for ascribing more importance to religious feeling than to orthodox belief.—(Translator's Note.)



the archæological novel, and secretly sent a boy out to buy, in winter, buckwheat cakes and pease-pudding, and in summer, gooseberries and currants.

I think my cousin's influence over me was very good. With her a warm element came into the cell-like seclusion of my youth, it fostered and perhaps, indeed, preserved the scarcely developing feelings which might very well have been completely crushed by my father's irony. I learnt to be observant, to be wounded by a word, to care about somebody else, to love; I learnt to talk about my feelings. She supported my political aspirations, predicted for me an extraordinary future and fame, and with childish vanity, believed her that I was a future 'Brutus or Fabricius.'

To me alone she confided the secret of her love for an officer of the Alexandrinsky Regiment of Hussars, a black cape and a black dolman; it was a genuine secret for the hussar himself, as he commanded his squadron never suspected what a pure flame was glowing for him in the bosom of a girl of eighteen. I do not know whether I envied his lot, probably I did a little, but I was proud of having been chosen as a confidant, and imagined (after Werther) that this was one of those tragic passions, which would have a great *dénouement* accompanied by suicide, poison, and a dagger, and the idea even occurred to me that I might go to him and tell him all about it.

My cousin had brought shuttlecocks from Kortchev; in one of the shuttlecocks there was a pin, she would never play with any other, and whenever it fell to me or any one else she would take it, saying she was used to playing with it. The demon of mischief, which was always my evil tempter, prompted me to change the pin, that is, to stick it in another shuttlecock. The trick was fully successful, my cousin always took to the one with the pin in it. A fortnight later I told her; her face changed, she dissolved into tears and went off to her own



room. I was panic-stricken and unhappy and, after waiting for half an hour, went to her; her door was locked. I begged her to open it; she refused to let me in and said that she was ill, that I was no friend to her, but a heartless boy. I wrote her a note and besought her to forgive me; after tea we made it up, I kissed her hand, she embraced me and at once explained the full importance of the matter. A year before, the hussar had dined with them and after dinner played battledore and shuttlecock, and this was the shuttlecock with which he had played. I had pangs of conscience, I thought that I had committed a real sacrilege.

My cousin stayed until October. Her father sent for her to come home, promising to let her come to us at Vassilyevskoe the following year. We looked forward with horror to parting and, behold, one day a chaise came for her, and her maid carried off boxes and baskets to pack in it while our servants filled the chaise with all sorts of provisions for a full week's journey, and crowded at the entrance to say good-bye. We embraced warmly, she wept and I wept—the chaise drove out into the side street beside the very place where they used to sell us buckwheat cakes and pease-pudding, and vanished. I crossed the yard, it seemed so cold and horrid; I went up into my room—and there it seemed cold and empty. I set to work on my lesson for Protopopov, while I wondered where the chaise was now, and whether it had passed the town-gate or not.

My only comfort was the thought of our being together again at Vassilyevskoe the following June!

For me the country was always a time of renewal, I was passionately fond of country life. The forest, the fields, and the freedom—it was all so new for me who had been brought up in cotton-wool, within brick walls, not daring on any pretext to go out beyond the gate without asking leave and being accompanied by a footman. . . .

‘Are we going this year to Vassilyevskoe or not?’ From early spring I was greatly interested in this question. My father invariably said that this year he was going away early, that he longed to see the leaves come out, but he never could get off before July. Some years he would put it off so late that we never went at all. He wrote to the country every winter that the house was to be got ready and thoroughly warmed, but this was done through deep diplomatic considerations rather than quite seriously, in order that the village elder and the counting-house clerk might be afraid he would soon be coming and look after their work more carefully.

It seemed that we were going. My father told the Senator that he was longing to rest in the country and that the estate wanted looking after, but again weeks went by.

Little by little there seemed more ground for hope, provisions began to be sent off, sugar, tea, all sorts of cereals, and wine—then again there was a pause, and then at last an order was despatched to the village elder to send so many peasants’ horses on such a day—and so we were going, we were going!

I did not think then what the loss of four or five days when work in the fields was at its height must have meant to the peasants, but rejoiced with all my heart and hastened to pack my books and exercise books. The horses were brought, with inward satisfaction I heard their munching and snorting in the yard, and took great interest in the bustle of the coachmen, and the wrangling of the servants as to who should sit in which cart and where each should put his belongings. In the servants’ quarters lights were burning until daybreak, and all were packing, dragging sacks and bags from place to place, and dressing for the journey (which was one of over fifty miles). My father’s valet was the most exasperated of all, he realised the full importance of the packing; with

intense irritation he flung out everything which had been put in by others, tore his hair with vexation and was quite unapproachable.

My father did not get up a bit earlier next day, in fact I think he got up later than usual, and drank his coffee just as slowly, but at last, at eleven o'clock, he ordered the horses to be put in. Behind the carriage, which had four seats and was drawn by six carriage horses, there followed three and sometimes four conveyances—a coach, a chaise, a wagon, or instead of it, two carts; all these were filled with the house-serfs and their belongings, although wagon-loads had been sent on beforehand, and everything was so tightly packed that no one could sit with comfort. We stopped half-way to have dinner and to feed the horses in the big village of Perhushkovo, the name of which occurs in Napoleon's bulletins. This village belonged to the son of that elder brother of my father of whom I have spoken in connection with the division of the property. The neglected house of the owner stood on the high-road, surrounded by flat, cheerless-looking fields; but even this dusty vista delighted me after the stuffiness of town. In the house the warped boards and stairs shook, sounds and footsteps resounded loudly, the walls echoed as it were with astonishment. The old-fashioned furniture from the former owner's art museum was living out its day in this exile; I wandered with curiosity from room to room, went upstairs and downstairs and finally into the kitchen. There our man-cook, with a cross and ironical expression, was preparing a hasty dinner. The steward, a grey-haired old man with a swelling on his head, was usually sitting in the kitchen; the cook addressed his remarks to him and criticised the stove and the hearth, while the steward listened to him and from time to time answered laconically: 'May-be,' and looked disconsolately at all the upset, wondering when the devil would carry us off again.

The dinner was served on a special English service, made of tin or some composition, bought *ad hoc*. Meanwhile the horses had been put in ; in the hall and vestibule, people who were fond of meetings and leave-takings were gathering together : footmen who were finishing their lives on bread and pure country air, old women who had been prepossessing maids thirty years before, all the locusts of a landowner's household who through no fault of their own eat up the peasants' substance like real locusts. With them came children with flaxen hair ; barefooted and muddy, they kept poking forward while the old women pulled them back. They caught me on every opportunity, and every year wondered that I had grown so much. My father said a few words to them ; some went up to kiss his hand, which he never gave them, others bowed, and we set off.

A few miles from Prince Golitsyn's estate of Vyazma the elder of Vassilyevskoe was waiting for us on horseback at the edge of the forest, and he escorted us by a cross-road. In the village by the big house, approached by a long avenue of limes, we were met by the priest, his wife, the church servitors, the house-serfs, several peasants, and the village fool, who was the only one to display a feeling of human dignity, for he did not take off his hat, but stood smiling at a little distance and took to his heels as soon as any of the town servants attempted to approach him.

I have seen few places more picturesque than Vassilyevskoe. For any one who knows Kuntsovo and Yussupov's Arhangelskoe, or Lopuhin's estate facing the Savin monastery, it is enough to say that Vassilyevskoe lies on a continuation of the same bank of the Moskva, twenty miles from the same monastery. On the sloping side of the river lie the village, the church, and the old manor house. On the other side there is a hill and a small village, and there my father built a new house. The view from it embraced an expanse of ten miles of

country ; seas of quivering cornfields stretched endlessly ; homesteads and villages with white churches could be seen here and there ; forests of various hues made a semicircular setting, and the Moskva like a pale blue ribbon ran through it all. Early in the morning I opened the window in the room upstairs and gazed and listened and breathed.

And yet I regretted the old brick house, perhaps because it was there when I first went to the country ; I so loved the long, shady avenue leading up to it and the garden that had run wild ; the house had fallen into ruins and the slender graceful birch tree was growing out of a crack in the wall of the hall. On the left an avenue of willows ran along the riverside, beyond it there were reeds and the white sand down to the river ; on that sand and among those reeds I used at ten and eleven years old to play for whole morning. A bent old man, the gardener, used always to be sitting before the house, he used to distil peppermint water, cook berries, and secretly regale me on all sorts of vegetables. There were great numbers of crows in the garden : the tops of the trees were covered with their nests, and they used to circle round them, cawing ; sometimes, especially in the evening, they used to fly up in regular hundreds racing after one another with a great clamour ; sometimes one would fly hurriedly from tree to tree and then all would be still. . . . And towards night an owl would wail somewhere in the distance like a child, or go off into a peal of laughter. . . . I was afraid of these wild wailing sounds and yet I went to listen to them.

Every year, or, at least, every alternate year, we used to go to Vassilyevskoe. As I went away, I used to measure my height on the wall by the balcony, and I went at once on arriving to find how much I had grown. But in the country I could measure not only my physical growth, these periodical returns to the same objects showed me

clearly the difference in my inner development. Other books were brought, other objects interested me. In 1823 I was quite a child, I had children's books with me, and even those I did not read, but was much more interested in a hare and a squirrel which were living in the loft near my room. One of my principal enjoyments consisted in my father's permission to shoot from a falconet every evening, which operation of course entertained all the servants, and grey-haired old men of fifty were as much diverted as I was. In 1827 I brought with me Plutarch and Schiller; early in the morning I used to go out into the forest as far as I could and, imagining that I was in the Bohemian forests, read aloud to myself. Nevertheless, I was greatly interested in a dam which I was making on a small stream with the help of a serf-boy and would run a dozen times a day to look at it and repair it. In 1829 and 1830 I was writing a philosophical article on Schiller's *Wallenstein*, and of my old toys none but the falconet retained its charm.

Besides shooting there was, however, another enjoyment for which I retained an unalterable passion—watching the evenings in the country; now as then, such evenings are still times of devoutness, peace, and poetry. One of the last serenely-bright moments in my life reminds me also of those village evenings. The sun was sinking majestically, brilliantly, into an ocean of fire, was dissolving into it. . . . All at once the rich purple was followed by deep blue dusk, everything was covered with a smoky mist: in Italy the darkness falls quickly. We mounted our mules; on the way from Frascati to Rome we had to ride through a little village; here and there lights were already twinkling; everything was still, the mules' hoofs rang musically on the stone, a fresh and rather damp wind was blowing from the Apennines. As we came out of the village, there was a little Madonna standing in a niche with a lamp burning before her;



some peasant girls as they came from work with white kerchiefs on their heads sank on their knees and chanted a prayer; they were joined by some strolling flute-players who were passing by. I was deeply affected, deeply touched. We looked at each other . . . and with slow steps rode on to the inn where a carriage was waiting for us. As we drove homewards I talked of the evenings at Vassilyevskoe, and what was there to tell?

‘In silence stood the garden trees,  
Among the hills the village lay,  
And thither at the fall of night  
The lingering cattle wend their way.’

OGARYOV: Humorous Verse.

. . . The shepherd cracks his long whip and plays on his birch-bark pipe; there is the lowing and bleating and stamping of the herds returning over the bridge, the dog with a bark chases a straying sheep while she runs with a sort of wooden gallop; and then the songs of the peasant girls, on their way home from the fields, come closer and closer; but the path turns off to the right and the sounds retreat again. From the houses children run out at the creaking gates to meet their cows and sheep; work is over. The children are playing in the street and on the river-bank, their voices ring out with shrill clearness over the river in the evening glow; the parched smell of corn-kilns mingles in the air, the dew begins little by little to lie like smoke over the fields, the wind moves over the forest with a sound as though the leaves were boiling and the summer lightning, quivering, lights up the landscape with a dying, tremulous azure, and Vera Artamonovna, grumbling rather than cross, says, coming upon me under a lime tree: ‘How is it there is no finding you anywhere, and tea has been ready long ago and every one is at the table, here I have been looking and looking for you until my legs are tired.



I can't go running about at my age; and why are you lying on the damp grass like that? . . . you'll have a cold to-morrow, I'll be bound.'

'Oh, come, come,' I say, laughing to the old woman, 'I shan't have a cold and I don't want any tea, but you steal me the best of the cream from the very top.'

'Well, you really are a boy, there's no being angry with you . . . that's a queer thing to ask for! I have got the cream ready for you without your asking. Look at the lightning . . . well, that's right! It's good for the corn.'

And I go home skipping and whistling.

We did not visit Vassilyevskoe after 1832. My father sold it while I was in exile. In 1843 we stayed at another estate in the Moscow province, in the district of Zvenigorod, about fourteen miles from Vassilyevskoe. I could not help going over to visit my old home. And here we were again riding along the same cross-road; the familiar fir-wood and the hill covered with nut trees came into view, and then the ford over the river, the ford that had so delighted me twenty years before, the gurgling of the water, the crunching of the pebbles, the shouting coachmen and the struggling horses . . . and here was the village and the priest's house where he used to sit on a bench in a dark-brown cassock, simple-hearted, good-natured, red-haired, always in a sweat, always nibbling something and always afflicted with a hiccup; and here was the counting-house where the clerk Vassily Epifanov, who was never sober, used to write his accounts, huddled up over the paper, holding the pen by the very end with his third finger bent tightly under it. The priest was dead and Vassily Epifanov was keeping accounts and getting drunk in another village. We stopped at the village elder's hut, but found only the wife at home, the man himself was in the fields.

A strange element had crept in during those ten years;

instead of our house on the hill there was a new one, and a new garden was laid out beside it. As we turned by the church and the graveyard, we met a deformed-looking figure, dragging itself along almost on all fours; it was showing me something, I went up: it was a hunch-back and paralytic old woman, half-crazy, who used to live on charity and work in the former priest's garden. She had been about seventy then and death seemed to have overlooked her. She recognised me, shed tears, shook her head and kept saying: 'Ough! why even you are getting old, I only knew you from your walk, while I—there, there, ough! ough! don't talk of it!'

As we were driving back, I saw in the fields in the distance the village elder, the same as in our time. At first he did not know me, but when we had driven by, as though suddenly coming to himself with a start, he took off his hat and bowed low. When we had driven a little further I turned round; the village elder, Grigory Gorsky, was still standing in the same place, looking after us; his tall, bearded figure, bowing in the midst of the cornfield, gave us a friendly send-off from the home which had passed into strangers' hands.

## Chapter 4

### NICK AND THE SPARROW HILLS

*'Write how here on that spot (the Sparrow Hills) the story of our lives, yours and mine, developed.'*—A Letter, 1833.

THREE years before the time of my cousin's visit we were walking on the banks of the Moskva at Luzhniki, *i.e.* on the other side of the Sparrow Hills. At the river's edge we met a French tutor of our acquaintance dressed in nothing but his shirt; he was panic-stricken and was shouting, 'He is drowning, he is drowning!' But before our friend had time to take off his shirt or put on his trousers, an Ural Cossack ran down from the Sparrow Hills, dashed into the water, vanished, and a minute later reappeared with a frail-looking man, whose head and arms were flopping about like clothes hung out in the wind. He laid him on the bank, saying, 'We had better roll him or else he will die.'

The people standing round collected fifty roubles and offered it to the Cossack. The latter without affectation said very simple-heartedly: 'It's a sin to take money for such a thing, and it was no trouble either; come to think of it, he is no more weight than a cat. But we are poor people, though,' he added. 'Ask, we don't; but, there, if people give, why not take; we are humbly thankful.' Then tying up the money in a handkerchief he went to graze his horses on the hill. My father asked his name and wrote about the incident next day to Essen. Essen promoted him to be a non-commissioned officer. A few months later the Cossack came to see us and with him a pock-marked bald German, smelling of scent and wearing a curled fair wig; he came to thank us on behalf of the Cossack, it was the drowned man. From that time he took to coming to see us.

Karl Ivanovitch Sonnenberg, that was his name, was

at that time completing the German part of the education of two young rascals; from them he went to a landowner of Simbirsk, and from him to a distant relative of my father's. The boy, the care of whose health and German accent had been entrusted to him and whom Sonnenberg called Nick, attracted me. There was something kind, gentle, and dreamy about him; he was not at all like the other boys it had been my luck to meet, but, nevertheless, we became close friends. He was silent and dreamy; I was playful but afraid to tease him.

About the time when my cousin went back to Körtcheva, Nick's grandmother died; his mother he had lost in early childhood. There was a great upset in the house, and Sonnenberg who really had nothing to do was very busy too, and imagined that he was run off his legs; he brought Nick in the morning and asked that he might remain with us for the rest of the day. Nick was sad and frightened; I suppose he had been fond of his grandmother. He so poetically recalled her in after years:

‘ When even’s golden beams are blent  
With rosy vistas, radiant hued,  
I call to mind how in our home  
The ancient customs we pursued.  
On every Sunday’s eve there came  
Our grey and stately priest arrayed,  
And, bowing to the holy shrine,  
With his assistants knelt and prayed.  
Our grandmamma, the honoured dame,  
Would lean upon her spacious chair  
And, fingering her rosary,  
Would bend her head in whispered prayer.  
And through the doorway we could see  
The house-servants’ familiar faces,  
As praying for a ripe old age  
They knelt in their accustomed places.  
Meantime, upon the window-panes

The evening glow would shine, reflected,  
 While incense floated through the hall  
 By censers, swinging wide, projected.  
 Amid the silence so profound  
 No sound was heard except the praying  
 Of mingled voices. On my heart  
 Some feeling undefined was weighing,  
 A wistful sadness, dim and vague,  
 Of fleeting, childish dreams begot.  
 Unknown to me my heart was full  
 Of yearning for I knew not what.—

OGARYOV : Humorous Verse.<sup>1</sup> ..

. . . After we had been sitting still a little I suggested reading Schiller. I was surprised at the similarity of our tastes ; he knew far more by heart than I did and knew precisely the passages I liked best ; we closed the book and, so to speak, began sounding our mutual sympathies.

From Möros who went with a dagger in his sleeve ' to free the city from the tyrant,' from Wilhelm Tell who waited for Vogt on the narrow path to Küsnacht, the transition to Nicholas and the Fourteenth of December was easy. These thoughts and these comparisons were not new to Nick ; he, too, knew Pushkin's and Ryleyev's<sup>2</sup> unpublished poems. The contrast between him and the empty-headed boys I had occasionally met was striking.

Not long before, walking to the Pryesnensky Ponds, full of my Bouchot terrorism, I had explained to a companion of my own age the justice of the execution of Louis XVI. ' Quite so,' observed the youthful Prince O., ' but you know he was God's anointed ! ' I looked at him with compassion, ceased to care for him and never asked to go and see him again.

There were no such barriers with Nick, his heart beat as mine did. He, too, had broken loose from the grim conservative shore, and we had but to shove off more vigorously together and almost from the first day

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Juliet Soskice.

<sup>2</sup> One of the leaders of the Decembrists.—(*Translator's Note.*)

we resolved to work in the interests of the Tsarevitch Constantine !

Before that day we had had few long conversations. Karl Ivanovitch pestered us like an autumn fly and spoilt every conversation with his presence ; he interfered in everything without understanding, made observations, straightened Nick's shirt collar, was in a hurry to get home, in fact, was detestable. A month later we could not pass two days without seeing each other or writing letters ; with all the impulsiveness of my nature I devoted myself more and more to Nick, while he had a quiet and deep love for me.

From the very beginning our friendship took a serious tone. I do not remember that mischievous pranks ever took a foremost place with us, particularly when we were alone. Of course we did not sit still, our boyish years showed themselves in laughing and playing the fool, teasing Sonnenberg and playing with bows and arrows in the yard ; but at the bottom of it all there was something very different from idle companionship. Besides our being of the same age, besides our 'chemical affinity,' we were united by our common faith. Nothing in the world so purifies and ennobles early youth, nothing keeps it so safe as a keenly alert interest of a purely human character. We respected our future in ourselves, we looked at each other as 'chosen vessels,' predestined.

Nick and I often walked out into the country. We had our favourite places, the Sparrow Hills, the fields beyond the Dragomilovsky Gate. He would come with Sonnenberg to fetch me at six or seven in the morning, and if I were asleep would throw sand and little pebbles at my window. I would wake up smiling and hasten to go out to him.

The indefatigable Karl Ivanovitch had instituted these walks.

In the old-fashioned patriarchal education of Ogaryov

Sonnenberg plays the part of Biron.<sup>1</sup> When he made his appearance the influence of the old peasant who had looked after the boy was put aside; the discontented oligarchy of the servants' hall were forced against the grain to silence, knowing that there was no overcoming the damned German who fed at the master's table. Sonnenberg made violent changes in the old order of things. The old man who had been nurse positively grew tearful when he learned that the wretched German had taken the young master *himself* to buy ready-made boots at a shop! Sonnenberg's revolution, like Peter the Great's, was distinguished by a military character even in the most peaceful matters. It does not follow from that that Karl Ivanovitch's thin little shoulders had ever been adorned with epaulettes. But nature has so made the German, that if he does not reach the slovenliness and *sans-gêne* of a philologist or a theologian, he is inevitably of a military mind, even though he be a civilian. By virtue of this peculiarity Karl Ivanovitch liked tight-fitting clothes, buttoned up and cut with a waist, by virtue of it he was a strict observer of his own rules, and if he proposed to get up at six o'clock in the morning, he would get Nick up at one minute before six, and in no case later than one minute after six, and would go out into the open air with him.

The Sparrow Hills, at the foot of which Karl Ivanovitch had been so nearly drowned, soon became our 'Holy Mountain.'

One day after dinner my father proposed to drive out into the country. Ogaryov was with us and my father invited him and Sonnenberg to go too. These expeditions were not a joking matter. Before reaching the town-gate we had to drive for an hour or more in a four-seated

<sup>1</sup> Biron, favourite of the Empress Anna Ivanovna, was by her made practically ruler of Russia during her reign and designated as successor by her.—(Translator's Note.)



carriage, built by 'Joachim,' which had not saved it from becoming disgracefully shabby in its fifteen years of tranquil service and being heavier than a siege cannon. The four horses of different sizes and colours who had grown fat and lazy in idleness were covered with sweat and foam within a quarter of an hour; the coachman Avdey was forbidden to let them get into this condition, and so had no choice but to let them walk. The windows were usually closed, however hot it might be; and with all this, we had the indifferently oppressive supervision of my father and the restlessly fussy and irritating supervision of Karl Ivanovitch. But we gladly put up with everything for the sake of being together.

At Luzhniki we crossed the river Moskva in a boat at the very spot where the Cossack had pulled Karl Ivanovitch out of the water. My father walked, as always, bent and morose; beside him Karl Ivanovitch tripped along, entertaining him with gossip and scandal. We went on in front of them, and getting far ahead ran up to the Sparrow Hills at the spot where the first stone of Vitberg's temple was laid.

Flushed and breathless, we stood there mopping our faces. The sun was setting, the cupolas glittered, the city lay stretched further than the eye could reach; a fresh breeze blew on our faces, we stood leaning against each other and, suddenly embracing, vowed in sight of all Moscow to sacrifice our lives to the struggle we had chosen.

This scene may strike others as very affected and very theatrical, and yet twenty-six years afterwards I am moved to tears recalling it; there was a sacred sincerity in it, and that our whole life has proved. But apparently a like destiny awaits all vows made on that spot; Alexander was sincere, too, when he laid the first stone of that temple, which, as Joseph II.<sup>1</sup> said (though then mistakenly)

<sup>1</sup> Joseph II. of Austria paid a famous visit to Catherine II. of Russia in 1780.—(*Translator's Note.*)

when laying the first stone in some town in Novorossia, was destined to be the last.

We did not know all the strength of the foe with whom we were entering into battle, but we took up the fight. That strength broke much in us, but it did not crush us, and we did not surrender to it in spite of all its blows. The wounds received from it were honourable. Jacob's strained thigh was the sign that he had wrestled in the night with a God.

From that day the Sparrow Hills became a place of worship for us and once or twice a year we went there, and always by ourselves. There, five years later, Ogaryov asked me timidly and shyly whether I believed in his poetic talent, and wrote to me afterwards (1833) from his country house: 'I have come away and feel sad, sad, as I have never been before. And it's all the Sparrow Hills. For a long time I hid my enthusiasm in myself; shyness or something else, I don't myself know what, prevented me from uttering it, but on the Sparrow Hills that enthusiasm was not weighed down by solitude. You shared it with me and those were moments that I shall never forget, like memories of past happiness they have haunted me on my journey, while all around I saw nothing but forest; it was all so dark blue and in my soul was darkness, darkness.

'Write,' he concluded, 'how on that spot (that is, on the Sparrow Hills) the history of our lives, yours and mine, developed.'

Five more years passed. I was far from the Sparrow Hills, but near me their Prometheus, A. L. Vitberg, stood, austere and gloomy. In 1842 returning finally to Moscow, again I visited the Sparrow Hills, once more we stood on the site of the foundation stone and gazed at the same view, two together, but the other was not Nick.

From 1827 we were not parted. In every memory

of that time, general and particular, he with his boyish features and his love for me was everywhere in the foreground. Early could be seen in him that sign of grace, which is vouchsafed to few, whether for woe or for bliss I know not, but certainly for being apart from the crowd. A large portrait of Ogaryov as he was at that time (1827-8), painted in oils, remained for many years afterwards in his father's house. In later days I often stood before it and gazed at him. He was painted with a turned-down shirt collar; the painter had wonderfully reproduced the luxuriant chestnut hair, the youthfully soft beauty of his irregular features and his rather swarthy colouring; there was a dreaminess in the portrait that gave promise of intense thought, a vague melancholy and extreme gentleness shone in his big grey eyes that suggested the future greatness of a mighty spirit; such indeed he grew to be. This portrait, presented to me, was taken by a woman who was a stranger; perhaps these lines will meet her eyes and she will send it to me.

I do not know why the memories of first love are given such precedence over the memories of youthful friendship. The fragrance of first love lies in the fact that it forgets the difference of sex, that it is passionate friendship. On the other hand, friendship between the young has all the ardour of love and all its character, the same delicate fear of touching on its feelings with a word, the same mistrust of self and boundless devotion, the same agony at separation, and the same jealous desire for exclusive affection.

I had long loved Nick and loved him passionately, but did not venture to call him my friend, and when he was spending the summer at Kuntsovo I wrote to him at the end of a letter: 'Whether your friend or not, I don't know yet.' He first used the second person singular in writing to me and used to call me his Agathon after

Karamzin,<sup>1</sup> while I called him my Raphael after Schiller.<sup>2</sup>

You may smile if you like, but let it be a mild, good-natured smile, as men smile when they think of being fifteen. Or would it not be better to muse over the question, 'Was I like that when I was developing?' and to bless your fate if you have had youth (merely being young is not enough for it), to bless it doubly if you had a friend then.

The language of that period seems affected and bookish to us now, we have become unaccustomed to its vague enthusiasm, its confused fervour that passes suddenly into yearning tenderness or childish laughter. It would be as absurd in a man of thirty as the celebrated *Bettina will schlafen*,<sup>3</sup> but in its proper time this language of youth, this *jargon de la puberté*, this change of the psychological voice is very sincere, even the bookish tone is natural to the age of theoretical knowledge and practical ignorance.

Schiller remained our favourite.<sup>4</sup> The characters of his dramas were for us living persons; we analysed them, loved and hated them, not as poetic creations but as living men. Moreover we saw ourselves in them. I wrote to Nick, somewhat troubled by his being too fond of Fiesco, that behind every Fiesco stands his Verrina. My ideal was Karl Moor, but I soon changed it in favour of

<sup>1</sup> Karamzin (1766-1826), author of a great *History of the Russian State*, and also of novels in the sentimental romantic style of his period.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Philosophische Briefe*.

<sup>3</sup> See the *Tagebuch* of Bettina von Arnim for the account of her famous first interview with Goethe.—(Translator's Notes.)

<sup>4</sup> Schiller's poetry has not lost its influence on me. A few months ago I read *Wallenstein*, that titanic work, aloud to my son. The man who has lost his taste for Schiller has grown old or pedantic, has grown hard or forgotten himself. What is one to say of these precocious *altkluge Burschen* who know his defects so well at seventeen?

the Marquis of Posa. I imagined in a hundred variations how I would speak to Nicholas, and how afterwards he would send me to the mines or the scaffold. It is a strange thing that almost all our day-dreams ended in Siberia or the scaffold and hardly ever in triumph; can this be characteristic of the Russian imagination, or is it the effect of Petersburg with its five gallows and its penal servitude reflected on the young generation?

And so, Ogaryov, hand in hand we moved forward into life! Fearlessly and proudly we advanced, lavishly we responded to every appeal and sincerely we gave ourselves up to every enthusiasm. The path we chose was a thorny one, we have never left it for one moment, wounded and broken we have gone forward and no one has turned us aside. I have reached . . . not the goal but the spot where the road goes downhill, and involuntarily I seek thy hand that we may go down together, that I may press it and say smiling mournfully, 'So this is all!'

Meanwhile in the dull leisure to which the events of life have condemned me, finding in myself neither strength nor freshness for new labours, I am writing down *our* memories. Much of that which united us so closely has taken shape in these pages. I present them to thee. For thee they have a double value, the value of tombstones on which we meet familiar names.<sup>1</sup>

. . . And is it not strange to think that had Sonnenberg known how to swim, or had he been drowned then in the Moskva, had he been pulled out not by a Cossack of the Urals but by some soldier of the Apsheron sky infantry, I should not have met Nick or should have met him later, differently, not in that room in our old house, where, smoking cigars on the sly, we entered so deeply into each other's lives and drew strength from each other. He did not forget our 'old house.'

<sup>1</sup> Written in 1853.

‘ Old Home ! My old friend ! I have found thee,  
Thy cold desolation I see ;  
The past is arising before me,  
And sadly I gaze upon thee.  
Unswept and untended the courtyard,  
Neglected and fallen the well,  
Green leaves that once whispered and murmured  
Lie yellow and dead where they fell.  
The house is dismantled and empty,  
The plaster is spread on the grass,  
The heavy grey clouds wander sadly  
And weep for thy plight as they pass.  
I entered. The rooms were familiar :  
’Twas here—when we children were young—  
The peevish old man sat and grumbled,  
We feared his malevolent tongue.  
And this room, my friend, oh ! my comrade !  
We shared, one in heart and in mind,  
What bright golden thoughts were conceived here  
In days that lie dimly behind !  
A star shimmered faint through the window :  
The words that are left on the wall  
Were written when youth was triumphant,  
Inspirer, dictator of all !  
In this little room love and friendship  
Were fostered. What joys did they bring !  
But now, in its drear empty corners  
The spiders’ webs broaden and cling.  
And suddenly, smitten with terror,  
Methought in the graveyard near by  
I stood and I called on my loved ones,  
The dead did not answer my cry. . . .’

OGARYOV: Humorous Verse.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Juliet Soskice.

## Chapter 5

DETAILS OF HOME LIFE—EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PEOPLE  
IN RUSSIA—A DAY IN OUR HOUSE—VISITORS AND  
HABITUÉS—SONNENBERG—THE VALET AND OTHERS

THE insufferable dreariness of our house grew greater every year. If my University time had not been approaching, if it had not been for my new friendship, my political enthusiasm and the liveliness of my disposition, I should have run away or perished.

My father was hardly ever in a good humour, he was perpetually dissatisfied with everybody. A man of great intelligence and great powers of observation, he had seen, heard, and remembered an immense amount; an accomplished man of the world, he could be extremely polite and interesting, but he did not care to be and sank more and more into ill-humoured unsociability.

It is hard to say exactly what it was that put so much bitterness and spleen into his blood. Periods of passion, of great unhappiness, of mistakes and losses were completely absent from his life. I could never fully understand what was the origin of the spiteful mockery and irritability that filled his soul, the mistrustful unsociability and the vexation that consumed him. Did he bear with him to the grave some memory which he confided to no one, or was this simply the result of the combination of two elements so absolutely opposed as the eighteenth century and Russian life, with the assistance of a third, terribly conducive to the development of ill-humour, the idleness of the slave-owner?

Last century produced in the West, particularly in France, a wonderful crop of men endowed with all the weak points of the Regency and all the strong points of Rome and Sparta. These mixtures of Faublas<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> The hero of *La Vie du Chevalier de Faublas* (1787), by Louvet de Couvray, is the type of the effeminate rake and fashionable exquisite of the period.—(Translator's Note.)



Regulus opened wide the doors of the Revolution and were the first to rush in, crowding each other in their haste to reach the 'window' of the guillotine. Our age no longer produces these single-minded powerful natures; the eighteenth century on the contrary called them forth everywhere, even where they were not needed, even where they could not develop except into something grotesque. In Russia men exposed to the influence of this mighty Western movement became original, but not historical figures. Foreigners at home, foreigners in other lands, idle spectators, spoilt for Russia by Western prejudices and for the West by Russian habits, they were a sort of intellectual superfluity and were lost in artificial life, in sensual pleasure and in unbearable egoism.

To this class belonged the Tatar Prince, N. B. Yussupov, a Russian grandee and a European *grand seigneur*, a foremost figure in Moscow, conspicuous for his intelligence and his wealth. About him gathered a perfect galaxy of grey-headed gallants and *esprits forts*, all the Masalskys and Santis and *tutti quanti*. They were all rather cultured and well-educated people; having no work in life they flung themselves upon pleasure, pampered themselves, loved themselves, good-naturedly forgave themselves all transgressions, exalted their gastronomy to the level of a Platonic passion and reduced love for women to a sort of voracious gourmandise.

The old sceptic and Epicurean Yussupov, a friend of Voltaire and Beaumarchais,<sup>1</sup> of Diderot and Casti,<sup>2</sup> really

<sup>1</sup> Beaumarchais, author of *Le Barbier de Séville* and *Le Mariage de Figaro*.

<sup>2</sup> Casti (1721-1803), an Italian poet, 'attached by habit and taste to the polished and frivolous society of the *ancien regime*, his sympathies were nevertheless liberal,' satirised Catherine II. and, when exiled on that account from Vienna, had the spirit to resign his Austrian pension. The *Talking Animals*, a satire on the predominance of the foreigner in political life, is his best work. The influence of his poems on Byron is apparent in 'Don Juan.'—(*Translator's Notes*.)

was gifted with artistic taste. To see this, one need but go to Arhangelskoe and look at his galleries, that is, if they have not yet been sold bit by bit by his heir. He was magnificently fading out of life at eighty, surrounded by marble, painted and living beauty. In his house near Moscow Pushkin conversed with him and addressed a wonderful epistle to him, and there, too, pictures were painted by Gonzaga,<sup>1</sup> to whom Yussupov dedicated his theatre.

By his education, by his service in the Guards, by position and connections, my father belonged to this circle, but neither his character nor his health permitted him to lead a frivolous life to the age of seventy : and he passed to the opposite extreme. He tried to lead a solitary life and found in it a deadly dullness, the more because he tried to arrange it entirely *for himself*. His strength of will changed into obstinate caprice, his unemployed energies spoilt his character, making him insufferable.

When he was being educated, European civilisation was still so new in Russia that to be educated was equivalent to being so much the less Russian. To the end of his days he wrote more freshly and correctly in French than in Russian. He had literally not read one single book in Russian, not even the Bible. Though, indeed, he had not read the Bible in other languages either ; he knew the subject-matter of the Holy Scriptures generally from hearsay and from extracts, and had no curiosity to look into it. He had, it is true, a respect for Derzhavin<sup>2</sup> and Krylov<sup>3</sup> : Derzhavin because he had written an ode

<sup>1</sup> Gonzaga was a Venetian painter who came to Petersburg in 1792 to paint scenery for the Court Theatre. He planned the celebrated park at Pavlovsk.

<sup>2</sup> Derzhavin, Gavril Romanovitch (1743-1816), was poet-laureate to Catherine II., and wrote numerous patriotic and a few other odes.

<sup>3</sup> Krylov, Ivan Andreyevitch (1768-1844), was a very popular writer of fables in verse.—(*Translator's Notes*.)

on the death of his uncle, Prince Meshtchersky, Krylov because he had been with him as second at N. N. Bahmetyev's duel. My father did once pick up Karamzin's *History of the Russian Empire*, having heard that the Emperor Alexander was reading it, but he laid it aside, saying contemptuously : ' It is nothing but Izyaslavitch and Olgovitch, to whom can it be of interest ? '

For men he had an open, undisguised contempt—for all. Never under any circumstances did he reckon upon anybody, and I do not remember that he ever applied to any one with any serious request. He himself did nothing for any one. In his relations with outsiders he demanded one thing only, the observance of the proprieties ; *les apparences, les convenances* made up the whole of his moral religion. He was ready to forgive much, or rather to overlook it, but breaches of good form and good manners made him beside himself, and in such cases he was without any tolerance, without the slightest indulgence or compassion. I so long raged inwardly against this injustice that at last I understood it. He was convinced beforehand that every man is capable of any evil act ; and that, if he does not commit it, it is either that he has no need to, or that the opportunity does not present itself ; in the disregard of formalities he saw a personal affront, a disrespect to himself ; or a ' plebeian education,' which in his opinion cut a man off from all human society.

' The soul of man,' he used to say, ' is darkness, and who knows what is in any man's soul ? I have too much business of my own to be interested in other people's, much less to judge and criticise their intentions ; but I cannot be in the same room with an ill-bred man, he offends me, grates upon me ; of course he may be the best-hearted man in the world and for that he will have a place in paradise, but I don't want him. What is most important in life is *esprit de conduite*, it is more

important than the most lofty intellect or any kind of learning. To know how to be at ease everywhere, to put yourself forward nowhere, the utmost courtesy with all and no familiarity with any one.'

My father disliked every sort of *abandon*, every sort of openness; all that he called familiarity, just as he called every feeling sentimentality. He persistently posed as a man superior to all such petty trifles; for the sake of what, with what object? What was the higher interest to which the heart was sacrificed?—I do not know. And for whom did this haughty old man, who despised men so genuinely and knew them so well, play his part of impartial judge?—For a woman whose will he had broken although she sometimes contradicted him; for an invalid who lay always at the mercy of the surgeon's knife; for a boy whose high spirits he had developed into disobedience; for a dozen lackeys whom he did not reckon as human beings!

And what patience was spent on it, what perseverance, and how wonderfully well the part was played in spite of age and illness. Truly the soul of man is darkness.

Later on when I was arrested, and afterwards when I was sent into exile, I saw that the old man's heart was more open to love and even to tenderness than I had thought. I never thanked him for it, not knowing how he would take my gratitude.

Of course he was not happy; always on his guard, always dissatisfied, he saw with a pang the hostile feelings he roused in all his household; he saw the smile pass from the face and the words checked at his entrance; he spoke of it with mockery, with vexation, but made not a single concession and went his way with the utmost persistence. Mockery, irony, cold, malignant and scornful, was a weapon which he used like an artist; he employed it equally against us and against the servants. In early youth one can bear many things better than

sarcasm, and until I went to prison I was really estranged from my father, and joined with the maids and men-servants in leading a little war against him.

Moreover, he had persuaded himself that he was dangerously ill and was continually undergoing treatment; besides our own household doctor, he was visited by two or three others and had three or four consultations a year at least. Visitors, seeing always his unfriendly face and hearing nothing but complaints of his health, which was far from being so bad as he thought, left off coming. He was angry at this but never reproached a single person nor invited one. A terrible dullness reigned in the house, particularly on the endless winter evenings—two lamps lighted a whole suite of rooms; wearing felt or lamb's-wool high boots, a velvet cap, and a coat lined with white lambskin, bowed, with his hands clasped behind his back, the old man walked up and down, followed by two or three brown dogs, and never uttering a word.

A carefulness spent on worthless objects grew with his melancholy. He managed the estate badly for himself and badly for his peasants. The village elders and his *missi dominici* robbed their master and the peasants; on the other hand, everything that met the eye was subjected to redoubled supervision, candles were saved and the thin *vin de Graves* was replaced by sour Crimean wine at the very time when a whole forest was cut down in one village, and in another his own oats were sold to him. He had his privileged thieves; the peasant whom he made collector of *obrok* (payment from a serf in lieu of labour) in Moscow and whom he sent every summer to supervise the village elder, the market, the garden, the forest, and the field labours, saved enough in ten years to buy a house in Moscow. From a child I hated this minister without portfolio; on one occasion he beat an old peasant in the yard in my presence. I was so furious

that I hung on to his beard and almost fainted. From that time I could not look at him without dislike until he died in 1845. I several times asked my father where did Shkun get the money to buy a house.

‘That’s what sobriety does,’ the old man answered, ‘he never takes a drop of liquor.’

Every year near the time of carnival, the peasants from the Penza province used to bring from near Kerensk *obrok* in kind. For a fortnight a trail of poor-looking wagons were on the road, laden with pork, sucking pigs, geese, fowls, grain, rye, eggs, butter, and linen. The arrival of the Kerensk peasants was a holiday for all the house-serfs; they robbed the peasants and fleeced them at every step without the slightest right to do so. The coachmen charged them for the water in the well, and would not let their horses drink without payment. The women made them pay for warmth in the house, they had to pay homage to one aristocrat of the servants’ hall with a sucking pig and a towel, to another with a goose and butter. All the time they stayed in the yard the servants kept up a feast, holiday dishes were made, sucking pigs were roasted, and the hall was continually full of the fumes of onion, burnt fat, and the drink which had just been consumed. For the last two days of these junketings Bakay did not go into the hall and did not finish dressing, but sat in the outer kitchen with an old livery coat thrown over his shoulders, without his waistcoat and jacket. He was growing visibly thinner and becoming darker and older. My father put up with all this pretty calmly, knowing that it was inevitable and could not be altered.

After the dead provisions had been received, my father—and the most remarkable point about it is that the practice was repeated yearly—used to call the cook, Spiridon, and send him to the poultry bazaar and the Smolensky market to find out the prices; the cook



returned with fabulously small prices, less than half the real ones. My father would tell him he was a fool and send for Shkun or Slyepushkin. The latter had a fruit stall at the Ilyinsky Gate. And both considered the cook's prices terribly low, made inquiries and brought back prices rather higher. At last Slyepushkin offered to take the whole lot, eggs and sucking pigs and butter and rye 'to save all disturbance to your health, sir.' He gave a price I need hardly say somewhat higher than the cook's. My father agreed. Slyepushkin would bring him oranges and little cakes in honour of the bargain, and brought the cook a note for two hundred roubles.

This Slyepushkin was in great favour with my father and often borrowed money from him; he showed his originality in his thorough understanding of the old man's character.

He would ask for five hundred roubles for two months, and a day before the two months were over would appear in the hall with an Easter cake on a dish and the five hundred roubles on the Easter cake. My father would take the money, Slyepushkin would make a bow and ask for his hand to kiss, which was never given. But three days later Slyepushkin would come again to borrow money and ask for fifteen hundred roubles. My father would give it and Slyepushkin would again bring it by the time fixed. My father used to hold him up as an example, but a week later he would ask for a bigger sum, and in that way enjoyed the use of an extra five thousand roubles a year for his business, for the trifling interest of two or three Easter cakes, a few pounds of figs and Greek nuts and a hundred oranges and apples from the Crimea.

In conclusion, I will mention how some hundreds of acres of building timber were lost in Novoselye. In the 'forties, M. F. Orlov who, I remember, had been com-



missioned by the Countess Anna Alexeyevna to purchase an estate for her children, began treating for the Tver estate which had come to my father from the Senator. They agreed on the price and the business seemed to be settled. Orlov went to look at the land and then wrote to my father that on the map he had shown him a forest, but that there was no such forest.

‘That’s a clever man,’ said my father, ‘he took part in the conspiracy and wrote a book on finance, but as soon as it comes to business you can see what a silly fellow he is. These Neckers! Well, I’ll ask Grigory Ivanovitch to ride over, he’s not a conspirator, but he’s an honest man and knows his work.’

Grigory Ivanovitch, too, went over to Novoselye and brought the news that there was no forest, but only a semblance of one rigged up; so that neither from the big house nor the high-road could the clearing catch the eye. After the land was assigned to him the Senator had been at least five times to Novoselye, and yet the secret had never leaked out.

To give a full idea of our manner of life I will describe a whole day from the morning; the monotony of the days was precisely what was most deadly; our life went like an English clock regulated to go slowly, quietly, evenly, loudly recording each second.

At nine o’clock in the morning the valet who sat in the room next the bedroom informed Vera Artamonovna, my ex-nurse, that the master was getting up. She went to prepare the coffee which he always drank alone in his study. Everything in the house assumed a different aspect, the servants began sweeping the rooms, or at any rate made a show of doing something. The hall, until then empty, filled up, and even the big Newfoundland dog Macbeth sat before the stove and watched the fire without blinking.

Over his coffee the old man read the *Moscow News*

and the *Journal de St Pétersbourg*. I may mention that he had given orders for the *Moscow News* to be warmed, that his hands might not be chilled by the dampness of the paper, and that he read the political news in the French text, finding the Russian obscure. At one time he used to get a Hamburg newspaper, but could not reconcile himself to the fact that the Germans printed in German characters, and was always pointing out to me the difference between the French print and the German, saying that these grotesque Gothic letters with their little tails were bad for the eyes. Afterwards he subscribed to the *Journal de Francfort*, but in the end he confined himself to the journals of his own country.

When he had finished reading he would observe that Karl Ivanovitch Sonnenberg was in the room. When Nick was fifteen Karl Ivanovitch had set up a shop, but having neither goods nor customers, after wasting on this profitable undertaking the money he had somehow scraped up, he retired from it with the honourable title of 'merchant of Reval.' He was by then over forty, and at that agreeable age he led the life of a bird of the air or a boy of fourteen, that is, did not know where he would sleep next day nor on what he would dine. He took advantage of my father's being somewhat well-disposed towards him; we shall see at once what that meant.

In 1830 my father bought near our house another, bigger, better, and with a garden. The house had belonged to the Countess Rastoptchin, wife of the celebrated governor of Moscow. We moved into it; after that he bought a third house which was quite unnecessary, but was next it. Both these houses stood empty; they were not let for fear of fire (the houses were insured) and disturbance from tenants. Moreover they were not kept in repair, so they were on the sure road to ruin. In one of them the homeless Karl Ivanovitch was permitted to live on condition that he did not open the gates after

ten o'clock (not a difficult condition, since the gates were never closed), and that he bought firewood and did not get it from our household supplies (as a matter of fact he bought it from our coachman), and that he waited upon my father in the capacity of a clerk of special commissions, *i.e.* came in the morning to inquire whether there were any orders, turned up at dinner and, if there were no one else dining with him, spent the evening entertaining him with news and conversation.

Simple as Karl Ivanovitch's duties might appear to be, my father knew how to inject so much bitterness into them that my poor merchant of Reval, accustomed to all the calamities which can fall upon the head of a man with no money, with no brains, of small stature, pock-marked face and German nationality, could not always endure it. At intervals of two years or a year and a half, Karl Ivanovitch, deeply offended, would declare that 'this is utterly unbearable,' would pack up, buy or exchange various articles of suspicious value and dubious quality, and set off for the Caucasus. Ill-luck usually pursued him with ferocity. On one occasion his wretched nag—he was driving with his own horse in Tiflis and in the Redoubt Kali—fell down not far from the region of the Don Cossacks; on another, half his luggage was stolen from him; on another, his two-wheeled gig upset and his French perfumes were spilt over the broken wheel, unappreciated by any one, at the foot of Elborus; then he would lose something, and when he had nothing left to lose he lost his passport. Ten months later Karl Ivanovitch, a little older, a little more battered, a little poorer, with still fewer teeth and less hair, would as a rule meekly present himself before my father with a store of Persian insect powder, of faded silks and rusty Circassian daggers, and would settle in the empty house again on the condition of fulfilling the same duties and heating his stove with his own firewood.

Observing Karl Ivanovitch, my father would at once begin a small attack upon him. Karl Ivanovitch would inquire after his health, the old man would thank him with a bow and then after a moment's thought would inquire, for instance: 'Where do you buy your pomade?' I must here mention that Karl Ivanovitch, the ugliest of mortals, was a terrible flirt, considered himself a Lovelace, dressed with an effort at smartness and wore a curled golden wig. All this, of course, had long ago been weighed and taken account of by my father. 'At Bouis's on Kuznitsky Bridge,' Karl Ivanovitch would answer abruptly, somewhat piqued, and he would cross one leg over the other like a man ready to defend himself.

'What's the scent called?'

'Nacht-Violette,' answered Karl Ivanovitch.

'He cheats you, violet is a delicate scent.' Then in French, '*C'est un parfum*, but that's something strong, disgusting, they embalm bodies with something of that sort! My nerves have grown so weak it makes me positively sick; tell them to give me the eau-de-Cologne.'

Karl Ivanovitch would himself dash for the flask.

'Oh no, you must call some one else or you will come still closer; I shall be ill, I shall faint.'

Karl Ivanovitch, who was reckoning on the effect of his pomade in the maids' room, would be deeply offended.

After sprinkling the room with eau-de-Cologne my father would invent commissions; to buy some French snuff and some English magnesia, and to look at a carriage advertised for sale in the papers (he would never buy it). Karl Ivanovitch, bowing himself out agreeably and inwardly relieved to get off, would go away till dinner.

After Karl Ivanovitch, the cook made his appearance; whatever he bought or whatever he ordered, my father thought it extremely expensive.

'Ough, ough, how expensive! Why, is it because no supplies have come in?'

‘Just so, sir,’ answered the cook, ‘the roads are so bad.’

‘Oh very well, till they are in better condition we will buy less.’

After this he would sit down to his writing-table and write reports and orders to the villages, make up his accounts, between whiles scolding me, receiving the doctors and above all quarrelling with his valet. The latter was the greatest victim in the whole house. A little, sanguine man, hasty and hot-tempered, he seemed as though created expressly to irritate my father and provoke his reprimands. The scenes that were repeated between them every day might have filled a farce, but it was all perfectly serious. My father knew very well that the man was necessary to him and often put up with rude answers from him, but never ceased trying to train him, in spite of his efforts having been unsuccessful for thirty-five years. The valet on his side would not have put up with such a life if he had not had his own recreations; he was as a rule rather tipsy by dinner-time. My father noticed this, but confined himself to round-about allusions to it, advising him, for instance, to munch a little black bread and salt that he might not smell of vodka. Nikita Andreyevitch had the habit when he was a little drunk of scraping with his feet in a peculiar way when he handed the dishes. As soon as my father noticed this, he would invent some commission for him, would send him, for instance, to ask the barber Anton if he had changed his address, adding to me in French, ‘I know that he has not moved, but the fellow is not sober, he will drop the soup-tureen and smash it, spill the soup on the cloth and frighten me. Let him go out for an airing. *Le grand air* will do him good.’

Usually on such occasions the valet made some answer but if he could find nothing to say he would go out, muttering between his teeth. Then his master would

call him and in the same calm voice ask him 'what did he say?'

'I didn't address a word to you.'

'To whom were you speaking, then? There is no one but you and me in this room or the next.'

'To myself.'

'That's very dangerous, that's the way madness begins.'

The valet would depart in a rage and go to his room; there he used to read the *Moscow News* and plait hair for wigs for sale. Probably to relieve his anger he would take snuff furiously; whether his snuff was particularly strong or the nerves of his nose were weak I cannot say, but this was almost always followed by his sneezing violently five or six times.

The master rang the bell, the valet flung down his handful of hair and went in.

'Was that you sneezing?'

'Yes, sir.'

'I wanted to bless you.' And he would make a motion with his hand for the valet to withdraw.

On the last day of carnival, all the servants would, according to custom, come in the evening to beg the master's forgiveness: on these solemn occasions my father used to go out into the great drawing-room, accompanied by his valet. Then he would pretend not to recognise some of them.

'Who is that venerable old man standing there in the corner?' he would ask the valet.

'The coachman Danilo,' the valet would answer abruptly, knowing that all this was only a dramatic performance.

'Good gracious! how he has changed. I really believe that it is entirely from drink that men get old so quickly; what does he do?'

'He hauls the firewood in for the stoves.'

The old man assumed an expression of insufferable pain.

'How is it you have not learned to talk in thirty years? . . . Hauls—how can he haul the firewood in?—firewood is carried in, not hauled in. Well, Danilo, thank God, the Lord has been pleased to let me see you once more. I forgive you all your sins for this year, all the oats which you waste so immoderately, and for not brushing the horses, and do you forgive me. Go on hauling in firewood while you have the strength, but now Lent is coming, so take less drink, it is bad for us at our age, and besides it is a sin.' He conducted the whole inspection in this style.

We used to dine between three and four o'clock. The dinner lasted a long time and was very boring. Spiridon was an excellent cook, but my father's economy on the one hand, and his own on the other, rendered the dinner somewhat meagre, in spite of the fact that there were a great many dishes. Beside my father stood a red clay bowl into which he himself put all sorts of pieces for the dogs; moreover, he used to feed them with his own fork, which was deeply resented by the servants and consequently by me. Why, it is hard to say. . . .

Visitors rarely called upon us and more rarely dined. I remember out of all those who visited us one man whose arrival to dinner would sometimes smooth the wrinkles out of my father's face, N. N. Bahmetyev. He was the brother of the lame general of that name and was himself a general also, though long on the retired list. My father and he had been friends as long ago as the time when both had been officers in the Izmailovsky regiment. They had both been gay young rakes in the days of Catherine, and in the reign of Paul had both been court-martialled, Bahmetyev for having fought a duel with some one and my father for having been his second; then one of them had gone away to foreign lands as



a tourist, while the other went to Ufa as Governor. There was no likeness between them. Bahmetyev, a stout, healthy and handsome old man, was fond of having a good dinner and getting a little drunk after it; was fond of lively conversation and many other things. He used to boast that in his day he had eaten as many as a hundred hearth-cakes, and he could when about sixty devour up to a dozen buckwheat pancakes drowned in a pool of butter with complete impunity. I have been a witness of these achievements more than once.

Bahmetyev had some shadowy influence over my father, or at any rate did keep him in check. When Bahmetyev noticed that my father's ill-humour was beyond bounds, he would put on his hat and say with a military scrape: 'Good-bye—you are ill and stupid to-day; I meant to stay to dinner but I cannot endure sour faces at table! *Gehorsamer diener!*' . . . and my father by way of explanation would say to me: 'What a lively impresario N. N. still is! Thank God, he's a healthy man and cannot understand a suffering Job like me; there are twenty degrees of frost, but he dashes here all the way from Pokrovka in his sledge as though it were nothing . . . while I thank the Creator every morning that I wake up alive, that I am still breathing. Oh . . . oh . . . ough . . .! it's a true proverb; the well-fed don't understand the hungry!' This was the utmost condescension that could be expected from him.

From time to time there were family dinners at which the Senator, the Golohvastovs and others were present, and these dinners were not casually given, nor for the sake of any pleasure to be derived from them, but were due to profound considerations of economy and diplomacy. Thus on the 20th February, the Senator's name-day, we gave a dinner in his honour, while on the 24th June, my father's name-day, a dinner was given at the Senator's,

an arrangement which, besides setting a moral example of brotherly love, saved each of them from giving a much bigger dinner at home.

Then there were various *habitués*; Sonnenberg would appear *ex officio*, and having just before dinner swallowed a glass of vodka and a Reval sardine at home he would refuse a minute glass of some specially flavoured vodka; sometimes my last French tutor, a miserly old fellow with an insolent face, fond of talking scandal, would come. Monsieur Thirié so often made mistakes, pouring wine into his tumbler instead of beer and drinking it off apologetically, that at last my father said to him, 'The *vin de Graves* stands on your right side, so you won't make a mistake again,' and Thirié, stuffing a huge pinch of snuff into his broad nose that turned up on one side, scattered the snuff on his plate.

Among these visitors one was an extremely funny individual. A little bald old man, invariably dressed in a short and narrow swallow-tail coat, and in a waistcoat that ended precisely where the waistcoat now begins, and carrying a thin little cane, he was in his whole figure the embodiment of a period twenty years earlier, in 1830 of 1810 and in 1840 of 1820. Dmitri Ivanovitch Pimenov, a civil councillor by grade, was one of the superintendents of the Sheremetyevsky Almshouse, and was, moreover, a literary man. Scantily endowed by nature and brought up on the sentimentalism of Karamzin, on Marmontel<sup>1</sup> and Marivaux,<sup>2</sup> Pimenov might be said to take a position midway between Shalikov and V. Panaev.<sup>3</sup> The Voltaire of this honourable phalanx was the head of the secret

<sup>1</sup> Marmontel (1723-1799), author of the *Contes Moraux* and other stories.

<sup>2</sup> Marivaux (1688-1763), author of numerous plays and a novel called *Marianne*—all distinguished by an excessive refinement of sentiment and language.

<sup>3</sup> Shalikov and V. Panaev were insignificant writers of the early part of the eighteenth century.—(Translator's Notes.)

police under Alexander, Yakov Ivanovitch de Sanglain; its promising young man, Pimen Arapov.<sup>1</sup> They were all in close relation with the universal patriarch Ivan Ivanovitch Dmitriev;<sup>2</sup> he had no rivals, but there was Vassily Lvovitch Pushkin.<sup>3</sup> Pimenov went every Thursday to the ancient Dmitriev to discuss beauties of style and the deterioration of the language of to-day in his house in Sadovy Street. Pimenov himself had tried the slippery career of Russian literature; at first he had edited the *Thoughts of the Duc de La Rochefoucauld*, then he wrote a treatise on feminine beauty and charm. Of this treatise, which I have not taken in my hand since I was sixteen, I remember only long comparisons in the style in which Plutarch compares his heroes; of the fair with the dark, 'though a fair woman is this and that and the other, on the other hand a dark woman is this and that and the other. . . .' Pimenov's chief peculiarity lay not in his having edited books which no one ever read, but in the fact that if he began laughing he could not stop, and his mirth would grow into a regular fit of hysterics with sudden outbursts and hollow peals of laughter. He knew this, and so, when he saw something laughable coming, began to take measures; brought out a pocket-handkerchief, looked at his watch, buttoned up his coat, hid his face in his hands, and when the crisis came, stood up, turned to the wall, leaned against it and writhed in agony for half an hour or more, then, crimson

<sup>1</sup> Arapov (1796-1861) wrote some twenty plays, but is chiefly remembered for the *Chronicle of the Russian Theatre* (published after his death), a chronological record of everything performed on the Russian stage up to 1825.

<sup>2</sup> I. I. Dmitriev (1760-1837) wrote a number of fables and songs, of which 'The Little Dove' is the best known. He was a great patron of young literary men, and in 1810 was made Minister of Justice.

<sup>3</sup> Vassily Lvovitch Pushkin, a minor poet, uncle of the famous Pushkin.—(*Translator's Notes.*)

and exhausted by the paroxysm, he would sit down mopping the perspiration from his bald head, though the fit would seize him again long afterwards. Of course my father had not the faintest respect for him: he was gentle, kind, awkward, a literary man and poor, and therefore not worth considering on any ground: but he was fully aware of his convulsive risibility. On the strength of it he would make him laugh until every one else in the room was, under his influence, also moved to a sort of unnatural laughter. The instigator of our mirth would look at us, smiling innocently, as a man looks at a crowd of noisy puppies.

Sometimes my father played dreadful tricks on the unfortunate amateur of feminine charm and beauty. Colonel So-and-so, the servant would announce.

‘Ask him in,’ my father would say, and turning to Pimenov he would add: ‘Please be on your guard when he is here, Dmitri Ivanovitch; he has an unfortunate tic and when he talks he makes a strange sound as though he had a chronic hiccup.’ Thereupon he would give a perfect imitation of the Colonel. ‘I know you are ready to laugh, please restrain yourself.’

This was enough. At the second word the Colonel uttered, Pimenov would take out his handkerchief, make a parasol of his hands, and at last jump up.

The Colonel would look at him in amazement, while my father would say to me with great composure: ‘What is the matter with Dmitri Ivanovitch? *Il est malade*, he has spasms; tell them to make haste and get him a glass of cold water and give him eau-de-Cologne.’ On such occasions Pimenov would snatch up his hat and go, laughing, until he had reached the Arbatsky Gates, halting at the cross-roads and leaning against lamp-posts.

For several years he came regularly every alternate Sunday to dine with us, and his punctuality in coming and his unpunctuality if he missed a Sunday angered my

father equally and impelled him to worry Pimenov. Yet the good-natured man went on coming, and coming on foot from the Red Gate to old Konyushenny Street till he died, and not at all funnily. After ailing for a long time, the solitary old bachelor, as he lay dying, saw his housekeeper carry off all his things, his clothes, even the linen from his bed, leaving him entirely uncared for.

But the real *souffre-douleur* at dinner were various old women, the poor and casual dependents of Princess Hovansky, my father's sister. For the sake of a change, and also partly to find out how everything was going on in our house, whether there were quarrels in the family, whether the cook had had a fight with his wife, and whether the master had found out that Palashka or Ulyasha were about to bring an addition to the household, they would sometimes come on holidays to spend a whole day. It must be noted that these widows had forty or fifty years ago, before they were married, been attached to the household of my father's aunt, old Princess Meshchersky, and afterwards to that of her niece, and had known my father since those days; that in this interval between their dependence in their youth and their return in old age, they had spent some twenty years quarrelling with their husbands, keeping them from drink, looking after them when they were paralysed, and escorting them to the cemetery. Some had been trailing from one place to another in Bessarabia with a garrison officer and a crowd of children, others had spent years with a criminal charge hanging over their husbands, and all these experiences of life had left upon them the traces of government offices and provincial towns; a dread of the powerful of this earth, a cringing spirit and a sort of dull-witted bigotry.

Amazing scenes took place with them.

'Why is this, Anna Yakimovna; are you ill that you

don't eat anything?' my father would ask. Huddling herself together the widow of some overseer in Kremen-chug, a wretched old woman with a worn and faded face, who always smelt strongly of some plaster, would answer with cringing eyes and deprecating fingers: 'Forgive me, Ivan Alexeyevitch, sir, I am really ashamed, but there, it is my old-fashioned ways, sir. Ha, ha, ha, it's the Fast of the Assumption now.'

'Oh, how tiresome! You are always so devout! It's not what goes into the mouth, my good woman, that defiles, but what comes out of it; whether you eat one thing or another, it all goes the same way; now what comes out of the mouth, you must watch over . . . your judgments of your neighbours. Come, you had better dine at home on such days, or we shall have a Turk coming next asking for pilau; I don't keep a restaurant *à la carte*.'

The frightened old woman, who had intended to ask for some dish made of flour or cereals, would fall upon the kvass and salad, making a great show of eating a great deal.

But it is noteworthy that she, or any of the others, had only to eat meat during a fast for my father, though he never touched Lenten dishes himself, to say, shaking his head mournfully: 'I should not have thought it was right for you, Anna Yakimovna, to forsake the habits of your forefathers for the last few years of your life. I sin and eat meat, owing to my many infirmities; but you, thank God, have kept the fasts all your life and suddenly at your age . . . what an example for *them*,' and he motioned towards the servants. And the poor old woman had to attack the kvass and the salad again.

These scenes made me very indignant; sometimes I was so bold as to intervene and remind him of the contrary opinion he had expressed. Then my father would rise from his seat, take off his velvet cap by the tassel, and,

holding it in the air, thank me for the lesson and beg pardon for his forgetfulness, and then would say to the old lady : ' It's a terrible age ! It's no wonder you eat meat in the fast, since children teach their parents ! What are we coming to ? It's dreadful to think of it ! Luckily you and I won't live to see it.'

After dinner my father lay down to rest for an hour and a half. The servants at once dispersed to beer-shops and eating-houses. At seven o'clock tea was served ; then sometimes some one would come in, the Senator more often than any one ; it was a time of leisure for all of us. The Senator usually brought various items of news and told them eagerly. My father affected complete inattention as he listened to him : he assumed a serious face, when his brother had expected him to be dying of laughter, and would cross-question him as though he had not heard the point, when the Senator had been describing something striking.

The Senator came in for it in a very different way when he contradicted or was not of the same opinion as his younger brother (which rarely happened, however), and sometimes, indeed, when he did not contradict, if my father was particularly ill-humoured. In these tragi-comic scenes, what was funniest was the Senator's genuine heat and my father's affected artificial coolness.

' Well, you are ill to-day,' the Senator would say impatiently, and he would snatch his hat and rush off. Once in his vexation he could not open the door and kicked it with all his might, saying ' the confounded door !'

My father went up, coolly opened the door inwards, and in a perfectly composed voice observed : ' The door does its duty, it opens inwards, and you try to open it outwards, and are cross with it.' It may not be out of place to mention that the Senator was two years older than my father and addressed him in the second person



singular, while the latter as the younger brother used the plural form, 'you.'

After the Senator had gone, my father would retire to his bedroom, would every day inquire whether the gates were closed, would receive an answer in the affirmative, would express doubts on the subject but do nothing to make certain. Then began a lengthy routine of washings, fomentations, and medicines; his valet made ready on a little table by the bed a perfect arsenal of different objects — medicine-bottles, night-lights, pill-boxes. The old man as a rule read for an hour Bourienné's *Mémorial de Sainte Helène* and other memoirs; then came the night.

Such was our household when I left it in 1834, so I found it in 1840, and so it continued until his death in 1846.

At thirty when I returned from exile I realised that my father had been right in many things, that he had unhappily a distressingly good understanding of men. But it was not my fault that he preached even what was true in a way so revolting to a youthful heart. His mind chilled by a long life in a circle of depraved men put him on his guard against every one, and his callous heart did not crave for reconciliation, and so he remained in a hostile attitude to every one on earth.

I found him in 1839, and still more markedly in 1842, weak and really ill. The Senator was dead, the desolation about him was greater than ever and he even had a different valet; but he himself was just the same, only his physical powers were changed, there was the same spiteful intelligence, the same tenacious memory, he still worried every one over trifles, and Sonnenberg, still unchanged, camped out in the old house as before and carried out commissions.

Only then I appreciated all the desolateness of his life; I looked with an aching heart at the mournful significance

of this lonely abandoned existence, dying out in the arid, barren, stony wilderness which he had created about himself, but which it was not in his power to change; he knew that, he saw death approaching, and, overcoming weakness and infirmity, he jealously and obstinately controlled himself. I was dreadfully sorry for the old man, but I could do nothing, he was unapproachable.

. . . Sometimes I passed softly by his study where, sitting in a rough, uncomfortable, deep armchair, surrounded by his dogs, he would all alone play with my three-year-old boy. It seemed as though the clenched hands and stiffened nerves of the old man relaxed at the sight of the child, and he found rest from the incessant agitation, conflict, and vexation in which he had kept himself, as his dying hand touched the cradle.

## Chapter 6

THE KREMLIN DEPARTMENT—MOSCOW UNIVERSITY—OUR  
SET—THE CHEMIST—THE MALOV AFFAIR—THE CHOLERA  
—FILARET—V. PASSEK—GENERAL LISSOVSKY—THE  
SUNGUROV AFFAIR

*'Oh, years of boundless ecstasies,  
Of visions bright and free!  
Where now your mirth untouched by spite,  
Your hopeful toil and noisy glee?'*

OGARYOV: Humorous Verse.

IN spite of the lame general's sinister predictions my father put my name down with N. B. Yussupov for a berth in the Kremlin department. I signed a paper and there the matter ended; I heard nothing more of the service, except that three years later Yussupov sent the Palace architect, who always shouted as though he were standing on the scaffolding of the fifth storey and there giving orders to workmen in the basement, to announce that I had received the first grade in the service. These amazing incidents were, I may remark in passing, useless, for I rose above the grades received in the service by taking my degree—it was not worth while taking so much trouble for the sake of two or three years' seniority. And meanwhile this supposed post in the service almost prevented me from entering the university. The Council, seeing that I was reckoned as in the office of the Kremlin department, refused me the right to go in for the examination.

For those in the government service, there were special after-dinner courses of study, extremely limited in scope and only qualifying for entrance into the so-called 'committee examinations.' All the wealthy idlers, the young snobs who had learnt nothing, all those who did not want to serve in the army and were in a hurry to get the grade of assessor went in for the 'committee examinations'; they were gold mines for the old

professors, who coached them privately for twenty roubles the lesson.

To begin my life in these Caudine Forks of learning was far from suiting my ideas. I told my father resolutely that if he could not find some way out of it, I should resign my post in the service.

My father was angry, said that with my caprices I was preventing him from making a career for me, and abused the teachers who had put this nonsense into my head, but, seeing that all this had very little effect upon me, he made up his mind to go to Yussupov.

The latter settled the matter in a trice, after the fashion of a great nobleman and a Tatar. He called his secretary and told him to write me a leave of absence for three years. The secretary hesitated and hesitated, and at last, half in terror, submitted that leave of absence for longer than four months could not be given without the sanction of the Most High.

'What nonsense, my man,' the prince said to him. 'Where is the difficulty? Well, if leave of absence is impossible, write that I commission him to attend the university courses for three years to perfect himself in the sciences.'

His secretary wrote this and next day I was sitting in the amphitheatre of the Physico-Mathematical auditorium.

The University of Moscow and the Lyceum of Tsarskoe Syelo play a significant part in the history of Russian education and in the life of the last two generations.

The Moscow University grew in importance together with the city itself after 1812. Degraded by Peter the Great from being the royal capital, Moscow was promoted by Napoleon (partly intentionally, but still more unintentionally) to being the capital of the Russian people. The people realised their ties of blood with Moscow

from the pain felt at the news of its being taken by the enemy. From that time a new epoch began for the city. Its university became more and more the centre of Russian culture. All the conditions necessary for its development were combined—historical significance, geographical position, and the absence of the Tsar.

The intensified mental activity of Petersburg after the death of Paul came to a gloomy close on the Fourteenth of December. Nicholas appeared with five gibbets, with penal servitude, with the white strap and the light blue uniform of Benckendorf.<sup>1</sup>

The tide turned, the blood rushed to the heart, the activity that was outwardly concealed was surging inwardly. Moscow University remained firm and was the foremost to stand out in sharp relief against the general darkness. The Tsar began to hate it from the time of the Polezhaev affair.<sup>2</sup> He sent A. Pissarev, the major-general of the 'Kaluga Evenings,' as director, commanded the students to be dressed in uniform, commanded them to wear a sword, then forbade them to wear a sword, condemned Polezhaev to be a common soldier for his verses and punished Kostenetsky and his comrades for their prose, destroyed the Kritskys<sup>3</sup> for a bust, sentenced us to exile for Saint-Simonism, then made Prince Sergey Mihalovitch Golitsyn director, and then took no further notice of that 'hot-bed of vice,' piously advising young men who had finished their studies at the Lyceum or at the School of Jurisprudence not to enter it.

Golitsyn was a surprising person, it was long before he could accustom himself to the irregularity of there being no lecture when a professor was ill; he thought

<sup>1</sup> The uniform of the secret police of which Benckendorf was head was light blue with a white strap.

<sup>2</sup> See later, Appendix to Chapter 7 for a full account of this.

<sup>3</sup> The Kritsky brothers were said to have broken a bust of the Tsar at a drinking party.—(*Translator's Notes.*)

the next on the list ought to take his place, so that it sometimes happened to Father Ternovsky to lecture in the clinic on women's diseases and the gynæcologist Richter to discourse on the Immaculate Conception.

But in spite of that the university that had fallen into disgrace grew in influence; the youthful strength of Russia streamed to it from all sides, from all classes of society, as into a common reservoir; in its halls they were purified from the superstitions they had picked up at the domestic hearth, reached a common level, became like brothers and dispersed again to all parts of Russia and among all classes of its people.

Until 1848 the organisation of our universities was purely democratic. Its doors were open to every one who could pass the examination, who was neither a serf, a peasant, nor a man excluded from his commune. Nicholas spoilt all this; he put restrictions on the admission of students, increased the fees of those who paid their own expenses, and permitted none to be relieved of payment but poor *noblemen*. All these belonged to the series of senseless measures which will disappear with the last breath of that drag on the Russian wheel, together with passports, religious intolerance and so on.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> By the way, here is another of the fatherly measures of the 'never to be forgotten' Nicholas. Foundling hospitals and the regulations for their public inspection are among the best monuments of the reign of Catherine. The very idea of maintaining hospitals, almshouses, and orphan asylums on part of the percentage made by the loan banks from the investment of their capital is remarkably intelligent.

These institutions were accepted, the banks and the regulations enriched them, the foundling hospitals and almshouses flourished so far as the universal thievishness of officials permitted them. Of the children brought into the Foundling Hospital some remained in it, while others were put out to be brought up by peasant-women in the country; the latter remained peasants, while the former were brought up in the institution itself. The more gifted among them were picked out to continue the high-school course, while the less promising were taught trades or sent to the Institute of Tech-

The young men of all sorts and conditions coming from above and from below, from the south and from the north, were quickly fused into a compact mass of comrades. Social distinctions had not among us the distressing influence which we find in English schools and barracks; I am not speaking of the English universities. They exist exclusively for the aristocracy and for the rich. A student who thought fit to boast among us of his blue blood or his wealth would have been sent to Coventry and made the butt of his comrades.

The external distinctions—and they did not go very deep—that divided the students arose from other causes. Thus, for instance, the medical section which was on the other side of the garden was not so closely united with us as the other faculties; moreover, the majority of the medical students consisted of seminarists and Germans. The Germans kept a little apart and were deeply imbued with the Western bourgeois spirit. All the education of the luckless seminarists, all their ideas were utterly different from ours, we spoke different languages; brought

nology. It was the same with the girls. Some were trained in handicrafts, others as children's nurses, while the cleverest became schoolmistresses and governesses. But Nicholas dealt a terrible blow to this institution, too. It is said that the Empress on one occasion, meeting in the house of one of her friends the children's governess, entered into conversation with her and, being very much pleased with her, inquired where she had been brought up, to which the young woman answered, the Foundling Hospital. Any one would suppose that the Empress would be grateful to the government for it. No—it gave her occasion to reflect on the *impropriety* of giving such an education to abandoned children.

A few months later Nicholas transferred the higher classes of the Foundling Hospital to the Officers' Institute, *i.e.* commanded that the foundlings should no longer be put in these classes, but replaced them with the children of officers. He even thought of a more radical measure, he forbade the provincial institutions in their regulations to accept new-born infants. The best commentary on this intelligent measure is to be found in the records of the Minister of Justice under the heading 'Infanticide.'



up under the yoke of monastic despotism, weighed down by rhetoric and theology, they envied us our ease and freedom ; we were vexed at their Christian meekness.<sup>1</sup>

I entered in the section of physics and mathematics in spite of the fact that I had never had a marked ability, nor much liking for mathematics. Nick and I had been taught mathematics together by a teacher whom we loved for his anecdotes and stories ; interesting as he was, he could hardly have developed a passion for his subject. His knowledge of mathematics extended only to conic sections, *i.e.* exactly as far as was necessary for preparing High School boys for the university ; a real philosopher, he never had the curiosity to glance at the ' university grades ' of mathematics.

What was particularly remarkable was that he had never read more than one book on the subject, and that book, Francoeur's Course, he studied over and over again for ten years ; but being continent by temperament and disliking superfluous luxury, he never went beyond a certain page.

I chose the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics because the natural sciences were taught in that Faculty, and just at that time I developed a great passion for natural science.

A rather strange meeting had led me to those studies.

After the famous division of the family property in 1822, which I have described, my father's ' elder brother ' went to live in Petersburg. For a long time nothing was heard of him, then suddenly a rumour came that he was getting married. He was at that time over sixty, and every one knew that he had a grown-up son besides

<sup>1</sup> Immense progress has been made in this respect. All that I have heard of late of the theological Academies, and even of the Seminaries confirms it. I need hardly say that it is not the ecclesiastical authorities but the spirit of the pupils that is responsible for this improvement.

other children. He married the mother of his eldest son; the bride, too, was over fifty. With this marriage he legitimised his son. Why not all the children? It would be hard to say why, if we had not known the chief object of it all; his one desire was to deprive his brothers of the inheritance, and this he completely attained by legitimising the son.

In the famous inundation of Petersburg in 1824 the old man was drenched with water in his carriage. He caught cold, took to his bed, and in the beginning of 1825 he died.

Of the son there were strange rumours. It was said that he was unsociable, refused to make acquaintances, sat alone for ever absorbed in chemistry, spent his life at his microscope, read even at dinner and hated feminine society. Of him it is said in *Woe from Wit*,<sup>1</sup>

‘He is a chemist, he is a botanist,  
Our nephew, Prince Fyodor,  
He flies from women and even from me.’

His uncles, who transferred to him the grudge they had against his father, never spoke of him except as ‘the Chemist,’ using this word as a term of disparagement, and assuming that chemistry was a subject that could not be studied by a gentleman.

His father used to oppress him dreadfully, not merely insulting him with the spectacle of grey-headed cynical vice, but actually being jealous of him as a possible rival in his seraglio. The Chemist on one occasion tried to escape from this ignoble existence by taking laudanum.

<sup>1</sup> Griboyedov's famous comedy, which appeared and had a large circulation in manuscript copies in 1824, its performance and publication being prevented by the Censorship. When performed later it was in a very mutilated form. It was a lively satire on Moscow society and full of references to well-known persons, such as Izmailov and Tolstoy ‘the American.’ Griboyedov was imprisoned in 1825 in connection with the Fourteenth of December.  
—(Translator's Note.)

The comrade with whom he used to work at chemistry by chance saved him. His father was thoroughly frightened, and before his death had begun to treat his son better.

After his father's death the Chemist released the luckless odalisques, halved the heavy *obrok* laid by his father on the peasants, forgave all arrears and presented them gratis with the army receipt for the full quota of recruits, which the old man used to sell them after sending his serfs as soldiers.

A year and a half later he came to Moscow. I longed to see him, for I liked him both for the way he treated his peasants and on account of the undeserved dislike his uncles felt for him.

One morning a small man in gold spectacles, with a big nose, with hair somewhat thin on the top, and with hands burnt by chemical reagents, called upon my father. My father met him coldly, sarcastically; his nephew responded in the same coin and gave him quite as good as he got: after taking each other's measure, they began speaking of extraneous matters with external indifference, and parted politely but with concealed dislike. My father saw that he was an opponent who would not give in to him.

They did not become more intimate later. The Chemist very rarely visited his uncles; the last time he saw my father was after the Senator's death, when he came to ask him for a loan of thirty thousand roubles for the purchase of land. My father would not lend it. The Chemist was moved to anger and, rubbing his nose, observed with a smile, 'There is no risk whatever in it; my estate is entailed; I am borrowing money for its improvement. I have no children and we are each other's heirs.' The old man of seventy-five never forgave his nephew for this sally.

I took to visiting the Chemist from time to time. He

lived in an extremely original way. In his big house on the Tverskoy Boulevard he used one tiny room for himself and one as a laboratory. His old mother occupied another little room on the other side of the corridor, the rest of the house was abandoned and remained exactly as it had been when his father left it to go to Petersburg. The blackened candelabra, the wonderful furniture among which were rarities of all sorts, a grandfather clock said to have been bought by Peter the Great in Amsterdam, an armchair said to have come from the house of Stanislav Leszcynski,<sup>1</sup> frames without pictures in them, pictures turned to the wall, were all left anyhow, filling up three big, unheated and unlighted drawing-rooms. Servants were usually playing some musical instrument and smoking in the hall, where in old days they had scarcely dared to breathe nor say their prayers. A man-servant would light a candle and escort one through this museum of antiquities, observing every time that there was no need to take my cloak off as it was very cold in the drawing-rooms. Thick layers of dust covered the horns and various curios, the reflections of which moved together with the candle in the elaborately carved mirrors, straw left from the packing lay undisturbed here and there together with scraps of paper and bits of string.

At last we reached the door hung with a rug which led to the terribly overheated study. In it the Chemist, in a soiled dressing-gown lined with squirrel fur, was invariably sitting, surrounded by books, phials, retorts, crucibles, and other apparatus. In that study where Chevalier's microscope now reigned supreme and there was always a smell of chlorine, and where a few years before terrible infamous deeds were perpetrated—in that study I was born. My father on his return from

<sup>1</sup> Stanislav Leszcynski, king of Poland from 1702 to 1709. His daughter Maria was married to Louis xv. of France.—(*Translator's Note.*)

foreign parts before his quarrel with his brother stayed for some months in his house, and in the same house, too, my wife was born in 1817. The Chemist sold the house two years later, and it chanced that I was in the house again at evening parties, at Sverbeyev's, arguing there about Pan-Slavism and getting angry with Homyakov, who never lost his temper about anything. The rooms had been done up, but the front entrance, the vestibule, the stairs, the hall were all untouched, and so was the little study.

The Chemist's housekeeping was even less complicated, especially when his mother had gone away for the summer to their estate near Moscow and with her the cook. His valet used to appear at four o'clock with a coffee-pot, pour into it a little strong broth and, taking advantage of the chemical furnace, would set it there to warm, together with various poisons. Then he would bring bread and half a woodcock from the restaurant, and that made up the whole dinner. When it was over the valet would wash the coffee-pot and it would return to its natural duties. In the evening, the valet would appear again, take from the sofa a heap of books, and a tiger-skin that had come down to the Chemist from his father, bring sheets, pillows and bed-clothes, and the study was as easily transformed into a bedroom as it had been into a kitchen and a dining-room.

From the very beginning of our acquaintance the Chemist saw that I was interested in earnest, and began to persuade me to give up the 'empty' study of literature and the 'dangerous and quite useless pursuit of politics,' and take to natural science. He gave me Cuvier's speech on *Geological Cataclysms* and De Candolle's *Plant Morphology*. Seeing that these were not thrown away upon me he offered me the use of his excellent collection, apparatus, herbariums, and even his guidance. He was very interesting on his own ground, extremely

earned, witty and even polite; but one could not go beyond the monkeys with him; from stones to ourang-outangs, everything interested him, but he did not care to be drawn beyond them, particularly into philosophy, which he regarded as twaddle. He was neither a conservative nor a reactionary, he simply did not believe in people, that is, believed that egoism is the sole source of all action, and thought that it was restrained merely by the senselessness of some and the ignorance of others.

I was revolted by his materialism. The superficial, timid, half-Voltairianism of our fathers was not in the least like the Chemist's materialism. His outlook was calm, consistent, complete. He reminded me of the celebrated answer made by Lalande<sup>1</sup> to Napoleon: 'Kant accepts the hypothesis of God,' Bonaparte said to him. 'Sire,' replied the astronomer, 'in my studies I have never had occasion to make use of that hypothesis.'

The Chemist's atheism went far beyond the sphere of theology. He considered Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire<sup>2</sup> a mystic and Oken<sup>3</sup> simply a degenerate. He closed the works of the natural philosophers with the same contempt with which my father had closed Karamzin's *History*. 'They have invented first causes, spiritual powers, and then are surprised that they can neither find them nor understand them,' he said. 'This was a second edition of my father, in a different age and differently educated.'

His views on all the problems of life were still more comfortless. He thought that there was as little responsi-

<sup>1</sup> Lalande (1732-1807), a French astronomer connected with the theory of the planets of Mercury.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1772-1844), French naturalist and author of many books on zoology and biology—in which, in opposition to Cuvier, he advanced the theory of the variation of species under the influence of environment.

<sup>3</sup> Oken, German naturalist, who aimed at deducing a system of natural philosophy from *à priori* propositions, and incidentally threw off some valuable and suggestive ideas.—(Translator's Notes.)

bility for good and evil in man as in the beasts ; that it was all a matter of organisation, circumstances, and the general condition of the nervous system, of which he said *more was expected than it was capable of giving*. He did not like family life, spoke with horror of marriage, and naïvely acknowledged that in the thirty years of his life he had never loved one woman. However, one warm spot in this frozen man still remained ; it could be seen in his attitude to his old mother ; they had suffered a great deal together at the hands of his father, and their troubles had united them ; he touchingly surrounded her solitary and infirm old age with tranquillity and attention, as far as he knew how.

He never advocated his theories, except those that concerned chemistry ; they came out casually or were called for by me. He even showed reluctance in answering my romantic and philosophic objections ; his answers were brief, and he made them with a smile and with that delicacy with which a big old mastiff plays with a puppy, allowing him to tease and only pushing him off with a light pat of his paw. But it was just that which provoked me most and I would return to the charge without weariness, never gaining an inch of ground, however. Later on, namely twelve years afterwards, just as I recalled my father's observations I frequently recalled the Chemist's. Of course, he had been right in three-quarters of everything against which I argued, but of course I was right too. There are truths (we have spoken of this already) which like political rights are not given to those under a certain age.

The Chemist's influence made me choose the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics ; perhaps I should have done better to enter in the Medical Faculty, but there was no great harm in my first acquiring some degree of knowledge of the differential and integral calculus and then completely forgetting it.



Without the natural sciences there is no salvation for the modern man. Without that wholesome food, without that strict training of the mind by facts, without that closeness to the life surrounding us, without humility before its independence, the monastic cell remains hidden in the soul, and in it the drop of mysticism which may flood the whole understanding with its dark waters.

Before I completed my studies the Chemist had gone away to Petersburg, and I did not see him again until I came back from Vyatka. Some months after my marriage I went half secretly for a few days to the estate near Moscow where my father was then living. The object of my going was to effect a complete reconciliation with him, for he was still angry with me for my marriage.

On the way I halted at Perhushkovo where we had so many times broken our journey in old days. The Chemist was expecting me there and had actually got a dinner and two bottles of champagne ready for me. In those four or five years he had not changed at all except for being a little older. Before dinner he asked me quite seriously: 'Tell me, please, openly, how do you find married life, is there anything good in it, or not much?' I laughed. 'What boldness it is on your part,' he went on. 'I wonder at you; in a normal condition a man can never venture on such a terrible step. Two or three very good matches have been proposed to me, but when I imagine a woman taking up her abode in my room, setting everything in order according to her ideas, perhaps forbidding me to smoke my tobacco, making a fuss and an upset, I am so panic-stricken that I prefer to die in solitude.'

'Shall I stay the night with you or go on to Perhushkovo?' I asked him after dinner.

'I have plenty of room here,' he answered, 'but for you I think it would be better to go on, you will reach

your father at ten o'clock. You know, of course, that he is still angry with you; well—in the evening before going to bed old people's nerves are usually exhausted and feeble—he will probably receive you much better this evening than to-morrow; in the morning you will find him quite ready for battle.'

'Ha, ha, ha! I recognise my teacher in physiology and materialism,' said I, laughing heartily, 'how your remark recalls those blissful days when I used to go to you like Goethe's *Wagner* to weary you with my idealism and listen with some indignation to your chilling opinions.'

'Since then,' he answered, laughing too, 'you have lived enough to know that all men's doings depend simply on their nerves and their chemical composition.'

Later on we had some sort of disagreement, probably we were both to blame. . . . Nevertheless in 1846 he wrote me a letter. I was then beginning to be the fashion after the publication of the first part of *Who is to Blame?* The Chemist wrote to me that he saw with grief that I was wasting my talent on 'idle pursuits! . . . I forgive you everything for the sake of your letters on the study of nature. In them I understood the German philosophy (so far as it is possible for the mind of man to do so)—why then instead of going on with serious work are you writing tales?' I sent him a few friendly lines in reply, and with that our relations ended.

If the Chemist's own eyes ever rest upon these lines, I would beg him to read them just before going to sleep at night when his nerves are exhausted, and then I am sure he will forgive me this affectionate gossip, especially as I keep a very warm and good memory of him.

And so at last the seclusion of the parental home was over. I was *au large*. Instead of solitude in our little room, instead of quiet and half-concealed interviews with

Ogaryov alone, I was surrounded by a noisy family, seven hundred in number. I was more at home in it in a fortnight than I had been in my father's house from the day of my birth.

But the parental roof pursued me even to the university in the shape of a footman whom my father ordered to accompany me, particularly when I went on foot. For a whole session I was trying to get rid of my escort and only with difficulty succeeded in doing so officially. I say 'officially,' because Pyotr Fyodorovitch, upon whom the duty was laid, very quickly grasped, first, that I disliked being accompanied, and, secondly, that it was a great deal more pleasant for him in various places of entertainment than in the hall of the Faculty of Physics and Mathematics, where the only pleasures open to him were conversation with the two porters and regaling them and himself with snuff.

With what object was an escort sent with me? Could Pyotr, who from his youth had been given to getting drunk for several days at a time, have prevented me from doing anything? I imagine that my father did not even suppose so, but for his own peace of mind took steps, which were insufficient but were still steps, like people who do not believe but take the sacrament. It was part of the old-fashioned education of landowners. Up to seven years old, it was the rule that I should be led by the hand up the staircase, which was rather steep; up to eleven, I was washed in my bath by Vera Artamonovna; therefore, very consistently, a servant was sent with me when I was a student; until I was twenty-one, I was not allowed to be out after half-past ten. I was inevitably in freedom and on my own feet when in exile; had I not been exiled, probably the same regime would have continued up to twenty-five or even thirty-five.

Like the majority of lively boys brought up in solitude, I flung myself on every one's neck with such sincerity

and impulsiveness, made propaganda with such senseless imprudence, and was so candidly fond of every one, that I could not fail to call forth a warm response from lads almost of the same age. (I was then in my seventeenth year.)

The sage rule—to be courteous to all, intimate with no one and to trust no one—did as much to promote this readiness to make friends as the persistent thought with which we entered the university, the thought that here our dreams would be accomplished, that here we should sow the seeds and lay the foundation of a league. We were persuaded that out of this lecture-room would come the company which would follow in the footsteps of Pestel and Ryleyev, and that we should be in it.

They were a splendid set of young men in our year. It was just at that time that theoretical tendencies were becoming more and more marked among us. The scholastic method of learning and aristocratic indolence were alike disappearing, and not yet replaced by that German utilitarianism which enriches men's minds with science, as the fields with manure, for the sake of an increased crop. A considerable group of students no longer regarded science as a necessary but wearisome short-cut by which they would come to be collegiate assessors. The problems that were arising amongst us had no reference whatever to grades in the service.

On the other hand, the interest in science had not yet had time to degenerate into doctrinarianism; science did not draw us away from the life and suffering around us. Our sympathy with it raised the social morality of the students, too, in an extraordinary way. We said openly in the lecture-room everything that came into our heads; manuscript copies of prohibited poems passed from hand to hand, prohibited books were read with commentaries, but for all that I do not remember a single case of tale-bearing or treachery. There were timid

young men who turned away and held aloof, but they too were silent.<sup>1</sup>

One silly boy, questioned by his mother on the Malov affair, under threat of the birch told her something. The fond mother—an aristocrat and a princess—flew to the rector and told him her son's tale as proof of his penitence. We heard of this and tormented him so that he could not remain until the end of his session.

This affair, for which I too was imprisoned, deserves to be described.

Malov was a stupid, coarse, and uncultured professor in the political section. The students despised him and laughed at him. 'How many professors have you in your section?' asked the director of a student in the political lecture-room. 'Nine, not counting Malov,' answered the student.<sup>2</sup> Well, this professor, who had to be left out of the reckoning when the others were counted, began to be more and more insolent in his treatment of the students; the latter made up their minds to turn him out of the lecture-room. After deliberating together they sent two delegates to our section to invite me to come with an auxiliary force. I at once gave the word to go out to battle with Malov, and several students went with me; when we went into the lecture-room Malov was on the spot and saw us come in.

On the faces of all the students could be seen the same fear: that on that day he might say nothing rude to them. This anxiety was soon over.

The overflowing lecture-room was restless and a vague subdued hum rose from it. Malov made some observations; there began a scraping of feet. 'You express

<sup>1</sup> At that time there were none of the inspectors and sub-inspectors who played the part of my Pyotr Fyodorovitch in the lecture-room.

<sup>2</sup> A pun on the name—the phrase meaning also 'Nine all but a little.'—(*Translator's Note.*)

your thoughts like horses, with your legs,' observed Malov, probably imagining that horses think with a trot and a gallop, and a storm arose, whistling, hisses, shouts; 'Out with him, *pereat!*' Malov, pale as a sheet, made a desperate effort to control the uproar but could not; the students jumped on to the benches, Malov quietly left his chair and, shrinking together, began to make his way to the door; the students went after him, saw him through the university court into the street and flung his goloshes after him. The last circumstance was important, for the case at once assumed a very different character in the street; but where in the world are there lads of seventeen or eighteen who would consider that?

The University Council was alarmed and persuaded the director to present the affair as completely closed, and for that reason to put the ringleaders, or at least some of them, in prison. This was prudent; it might otherwise easily have happened that the Tsar would have sent an aide-de-camp who, with a view to gaining a cross, would have turned the affair into a plot, a conspiracy, a mutiny, and would have suggested sending all the culprits to penal servitude, which the Tsar would graciously have commuted to service as common soldiers. Seeing that vice was punished and virtue triumphant, the Tsar confined himself to graciously confirming the students' wishes by authority of the Most High and dismissed the professor. We had driven Malov out as far as the university gates and he put him outside them. It was *vae victis* with Nicholas, but on this occasion it was not for us to complain.

And so the affair went on merrily; after dinner next day the porter from the head office, a grey-headed old man, who conscientiously assumed *à la lettre* that the students' tips were for vodka and therefore kept himself continually in a condition approximating to drunkenness rather than sobriety, came to me bringing in the cuff of

his coat a note from the rector; I was instructed to present myself before him at seven o'clock. After he had gone, a pale and frightened student appeared, a baron from the Baltic provinces, who had received a similar invitation and was one of the luckless victims led on by me. He began showering reproaches upon me and then asked advice as to what he was to say.

'Lie desperately, deny everything, except that there was an uproar and that you were in the lecture-room.'

'But the rector will ask why I was in the political lecture-room and not in my own.'

'What of it? Why, don't you know that Rodion Heiman did not come to give his lecture, so you, not wishing to waste your time, went to hear another.'

'He won't believe it.'

'Well, that's his affair.'

As we were going into the university courtyard I looked at my baron, his plump little cheeks were very pale and altogether he was in a bad way.

'Listen,' I said, 'you may be sure that the rector will begin with me and not with you, so you say exactly the same with variations. You did not do anything in particular, as a matter of fact. Don't forget one thing, for making an uproar and for telling lies ever so many of you will be put in prison, but if you go and tell tales and mix anybody else up in it before me, I'll tell the others and we'll poison your existence.'

The baron promised and kept his word honestly.

The rector at that time was Dvigubsky, one of the surviving specimens of the professors before the flood, or to be more accurate, before the fire, that is, before 1812. They are extinct now; with the directorship of Prince Obolensky the patriarchal period of Moscow University ended. In those days the government did not trouble itself about the university; the professors lectured or did not lecture, the students attended or did not attend, and



went about, not in uniform jackets *ad instar* of light-cavalry officers, but in all sorts of outrageous and eccentric garments, in tiny little caps that would scarcely keep on their virginal locks. The professors consisted of two groups or classes who placidly hated each other. One group was composed exclusively of Germans, the other of non-Germans. The Germans, among whom were good-natured and learned men such as Loder, Fischer, Hildebrand, and Heym himself, were as a rule distinguished by their ignorance of the Russian language and disinclination to learn it, their indifference to the students, their spirit of Western exclusiveness, their immoderate smoking of cigars and the immense quantity of decorations which they invariably wore. The non-Germans for their part knew not a single living language except Russian, were servile in their patriotism, as uncouth as seminarists, and, with the exception of Merzlyakov,<sup>1</sup> were treated as of little account, and instead of an immoderate consumption of cigars indulged in an immoderate consumption of liquor. The Germans for the most part hailed from Göttingen and the non-Germans were sons of priests.

Dvigubsky was one of the non-Germans: his appearance was so venerable that a student from a seminary, who came in for a list of classes, went up to kiss his hand and ask for his blessing, and always called him 'The Father Rector.' At the same time he was wonderfully like an owl with an Anna ribbon on its neck, in which form another student, who had received a more worldly education, drew his portrait. When he came into our lecture-room either with the dean Tchumakov, or with Kotelnitsky, who had charge of a cupboard inscribed *Materia Medica*, kept for some unknown reason in the mathematical lecture-room, or with Reiss, who was

<sup>1</sup> Merzlyakov, a critic and translator of some merit.—(*Translator's Note.*)

bespoken from Germany because his uncle was a very good chemist, and who, when he read French, used to call a lamp-wick a *bâton de coton*, and poison, *poisson*, and so cruelly distorted the word 'lightning' that many people supposed he was swearing—we looked at them with round eyes as at a collection of antiquities, as at the last of the Abencerrages,<sup>1</sup> representatives of a different age not so near to us as to Tredyakovsky<sup>2</sup> and Kostrov<sup>3</sup>; the times in which Heraskov<sup>4</sup> and Knyazhnin<sup>5</sup> were still read, the times of the good-natured Professor Diltey, who had two little dogs, one which always barked and the other which never barked, for which reason he very justly called one Bavardka and the other Prudentka.

But Dvigubsky was not at all a good-natured professor; he received us extremely curtly and was rude. I reeled off a fearful rigmarole and was disrespectful; the baron served up the same story. The rector, irritated, told us to present ourselves next morning before the Council, where in the course of half an hour they questioned, condemned and sentenced us and sent the sentence to Prince Golitsyn for ratification.

<sup>1</sup> Abencerrages, a Moorish family, on the legend of whose tragic fate in Granada, Chateaubriand founded his romance *Les Aventures du Dernier des Abencérages*.

<sup>2</sup> Tredyakovsky (1703-1769), son of a priest at Astrakhan, is said, like Lomonossov, to have walked to Moscow in pursuit of learning. He was the author of inferior poems, but did great service to Russian culture by his numerous translations. He was the first to write in Russian as spoken.

<sup>3</sup> Kostrov (1750-1796), a peasant's son and a seminarist, wrote in imitation of Derzhavin, but is better known for his translations of the *Iliad*, *Apuleius* and *Ossian*.

<sup>4</sup> Heraskov (1733-1807), author of an immense number of poems in pseudo-classic style. Wiener says 'they now appal us with their inane voluminousness.' But readers of Turgenev will remember how greatly they were admired by Punin. The best known of his epics is the *Rossiad*, dealing with Ivan the Terrible.

<sup>5</sup> Knyazhnin (1742-1791) wrote numerous tragedies and comedies, chiefly adaptations from the French or Italian, and of no literary merit.—(Translator's Notes.)

I had scarcely had time to rehearse the trial and the sentence of the University Senate to the students five or six times in the lecture-room when all at once the inspector, who was a major in the Russian army and a French dancing-master, made his appearance with a non-commissioned officer, bringing an order to seize me and conduct me to prison. Some of the students went to see me on my way, and in the courtyard there was already a crowd of young men, so evidently I was not the first taken ; as we passed, they all waved their caps and their hands ; the university soldiers moved them back but the students would not go.

In the dirty cellar which served as a prison I found two of the arrested men, Arapetov and Olov ; Prince Andrey Obolensky and Rozenheim had been put in another room ; in all, there were six of us punished for the Malov affair. Orders were given that we should be kept on bread and water ; the rector sent some sort of soup, which we refused, and it was well we did so. As soon as it got dark and the lecture-rooms emptied, our comrades brought us cheese, game, cigars, wine, and liqueurs. The soldier in charge was angry and grumbled, but accepted twenty kopecks and carried in the provisions. After midnight he went further and let several visitors come in to us ; so we spent our time feasting by night and sleeping by day.

On one occasion it somehow happened that the assistant-director Panin, the brother of the Minister of Justice, faithful to his Horse-Guard habits, took it into his head to go the round of the Imperial prison in the university cellars by night. We had only just lighted a candle and put it under a chair so that the light could not be seen from outside, and were beginning on our midnight repast, when we heard a knock at the outer door ; not the sort of knock which weakly begs a soldier to open, which is more afraid of being heard than of not being

heard; no, this was a peremptory knock, a knock of authority. The soldier was petrified; we hid the bottles and the students in a little cupboard, blew out the candle and threw ourselves on our trestle-beds. Panin entered. 'I believe you are smoking?' he said, so lost in thick clouds of smoke that we could hardly distinguish him and the inspector who was carrying a lantern. 'Where do they get a light, do you give it them?' The soldier swore that he did not. We answered that we had tinder with us. The inspector undertook to remove it and to take away the cigars, and Panin withdrew without observing that the number of caps in the room was double the number of heads.

On Saturday evening the inspector made his appearance and announced that I and another one might go home, but that the rest would remain until Monday. This distinction seemed to me insulting and I asked the inspector whether I might remain; he drew back a step, looked at me with the threateningly majestic air with which tsars and heroes in a ballet depict anger in a dance, and saying, 'Stay by all means,' walked away. I got more into trouble at home for this last sally than for the whole business.

And so the first nights I slept away from home were spent in prison. Not long afterwards it was my lot to have experience of a very different prison, and there I stayed not eight days but nine months, after which I went not home but into exile. All that comes later, however.

From that time forward I enjoyed the greatest popularity in the lecture-room. From the first I had been accepted as a good comrade. After the Malov affair, I became, like Gogol's famous lady, a comrade 'agreeable in all respects.'

Did we learn anything with all this going on, could we study? I imagine that we did. The teaching was more

meagre and its scope narrower than in the 'forties. It is not the function of a university, however, to give a complete training in any branch of knowledge; its work is to put a man in a position to continue study on his own account; its work is to provoke inquiry, to teach men to ask questions. And this was certainly done by such professors as M. G. Pavlov, and on the other side, by such as Katchenovsky.

But contact with other young men in the lecture-rooms and the exchange of ideas and opinions did more to develop the students than lectures and professors. . . . The Moscow University did its work; the professors whose lectures contributed to the development of Lermontov, Byelinsky,<sup>1</sup> Turgenev, Kavelin,<sup>2</sup> and Pirogov<sup>3</sup> may play their game of boston in tranquillity and still more tranquilly lie under the earth.

And what original figures, what marvels there were among them—from Fyodor Ivanovitch Tchumakov, who made formulas to fit in with those in the text-book with the reckless freedom of the privileged landowner, adding and removing letters, taking powers for roots and  $x$  for the known quantity, to Gavril Myagkov, who lectured on military tactics. From perpetually dealing with heroic subjects, Myagkov's very appearance had acquired an air of drill and discipline; buttoned up to the throat and wearing a cravat entirely free from curves,

<sup>1</sup> Byelinsky, Vissarion Grigoryevitch (1810-1848), was the greatest of Russian critics. See later, Chapter 25, Vol. II., for an account of him.

<sup>2</sup> Kavelin (1818-1855), a writer of brilliant articles on political and economical questions. Friend of Turgenev.

<sup>3</sup> Pirogov (1810-1881), the great surgeon and medical authority, was the first in Russia to investigate disease by experiments on animals, and to use anæsthetics for operations. He took an active part in education and the reforms of the early years of Alexander II.'s reign, and published many treatises on medical subjects. To his genius and influence as Professor of Medicine in Petersburg University is largely due the very high standard of medical training in Russia.—(*Translator's Notes.*)

he delivered his lectures as though giving words of command. 'Gentlemen!' he would shout; 'in the field—of artillery!' This did not mean that cannons were advancing into the field of battle, but simply that such was the heading in the margin. What a pity Nicholas avoided visiting the University! If he had seen Myagkov, he would certainly have made him Director.

And Fyodor Fyodorovitch Reiss, who in his chemistry lectures never went beyond the second person of the chemical divinity, *i.e.* hydrogen! Reiss, who had actually been made Professor of Chemistry because not he, but his uncle, had at one time studied that science! Towards the end of the reign of Catherine, the old uncle had been invited to Russia; he did not want to come, so sent his nephew instead. . . .

Among the exceptional incidents of my course, which lasted four years (for the University was closed for a whole session during the cholera), were the cholera itself, the arrival of Humboldt and the visit of Uvarov.

Humboldt was welcomed on his return to Moscow from the Urals in a solemn assembly, held in the precincts of the University by the Society of Scientific Research, the members of which were various senators and governors—people, in fact, who took no interest in science, either natural or unnatural. The fame of Humboldt, a privy councillor of his Prussian Majesty, on whom the Tsar had graciously bestowed the Anna, and to whom he had also commanded that equipment and diploma should be presented free of charge, had reached even them. They were determined not to disgrace themselves before a man who had been to Mount Chimborazo and had lived at Sans-Souci.

To this day we look upon Europeans and upon Europe in the same way as provincials look upon those who live in the capital, with deference and a feeling of our own inferiority, flattering them and imitating them, taking

everything in which we are different for a defect, blushing for our peculiarities and concealing them. The fact is that we were intimidated by the jeers of Peter the Great, by the insults of Biron, by the haughty superiority of German officers and French tutors, and we have not recovered from it. They talk in Western Europe of our duplicity and wily cunning; they mistake the desire to show off and swagger a bit for the desire to deceive. Among us the same man is ready to be naïvely Liberal with a Liberal or to play the Legitimist with a reactionary, and this with no ulterior motive, simply from politeness and a desire to please; the bump *de l'approbativité* is strongly developed in our skulls.

'Prince Dmitri Golitsyn,' observed Lord Durham, 'is a true Whig, a Whig in soul!'

Prince D. V. Golitsyn is a respectable Russian gentleman, but why he was a Whig and in what way he was a Whig I don't understand. You may be certain that in his old age the prince wanted to please Durham and so played the Whig.

The reception of Humboldt in Moscow and in the University was no jesting matter. The Governor-General, various military and civic chiefs, and the members of the Senate, all turned up with ribbons across their shoulders, in full uniform, and the professors wore swords like warriors and carried three-cornered hats under their arms. Humboldt, suspecting nothing, came in a dark-blue coat with gold buttons, and, of course, was overwhelmed with confusion. From the vestibule to the hall of the Society of Scientific Research, ambushes were prepared for him on all sides: here stood the rector, there a dean, here a budding professor, there a veteran whose career was over and who for that reason spoke very slowly; every one welcomed him in Latin, in German, in French, and all this took place in those awful stone tubes, called corridors, in which one cannot



stay for a minute without being laid up with a cold for a month. Humboldt, hat in hand, listened to everybody and answered everybody—I feel certain that all the savages among whom he had been, red-skinned and copper-coloured, caused him less trouble than his Moscow reception.

As soon as he reached the hall and sat down, he had to get up again. The Director, Pissarev, thought it necessary, in brief but vigorous language, to lay down the law in Russian concerning the services of his Excellency, the celebrated traveller; after which Sergey Glinka,<sup>1</sup> 'the officer,' with a voice of the year 1812, deep and hoarse, recited his poem which began :

*'Humboldt—Prométhée de nos jours !'*

Whilst Humboldt wanted to talk about his observations on the magnetic needle and to compare his meteorological records on the Urals with those of Moscow, the rector came up to show him instead something plaited of the imperial hair of Peter the Great . . . and Ehrenberg and Rosa had difficulty in finding a chance to tell him something about their discoveries.<sup>2</sup>

Things are not much better among us in the non-official world: ten years ago Liszt was received in Moscow society in much the same way. Silly enough

<sup>1</sup> Glinka, author of patriotic verses of no merit. Referred to as 'the officer' by Pushkin in a poem.—(*Translator's Note.*)

<sup>2</sup> How diversely Humboldt's travels were understood in Russia may be gathered from the account of an Ural Cossack who served in the office of the Governor of Perm; he liked to describe how he had escorted the mad Prussian Prince, Gumplot. What did he do? 'Just the same silly things, collecting grasses, looking at the sand; at Solontchaki he said to me, through the interpreter, 'Go into the water and get what's at the bottom'; well, I got just what is usually at the bottom, and he asks, 'Is the water very cold at the bottom?' 'No, my lad,' I thought, 'you won't catch me.' So I drew myself up at attention, and answered, 'When it's our duty, your Highness, it's of no consequence, we are glad to do our best.'

things were done in his honour in Germany, but here it took quite a different character. In Germany, it was all old-maidish exaltation, sentimentality, all *Blumenstreuen*, while with us it was all servility, homage paid to power, rigid standing at attention, with us it was all 'I have the honour to present myself to your Excellency.' And in that case, unfortunately, there was Liszt's fame as a celebrated Lovelace to add to it all. The ladies flocked round him, as peasant-boys at the cross-roads flock round a traveller while his horses are being harnessed, inquisitively examining himself, his carriage, his cap. . . . No one listened to anybody but Liszt, no one spoke to anybody else, nor answered anybody else. I remember that at one evening party, Homyakov,<sup>1</sup> blushing for the honourable company, said to me, 'Please let us argue about something, that Liszt may see that there are people in the room not exclusively occupied with him.' For the consolation of our ladies I can only say one thing, that in just the same way Englishwomen dashed about, crowded round, pestered and obstructed other celebrities such as Kossuth and afterwards Garibaldi. But alas for those who want to learn good manners from Englishwomen and their husbands!

Our second 'famous' visitor was also in a certain sense 'the Prometheus of our day,' only he stole the light not from Jupiter but from men. This Prometheus, sung not by Glinka but by Pushkin himself, in his 'Epistle to Lucullus,' was the Minister of Public Instruction, S. S. Uvarov. He amazed us by the multitude of languages and the variety of subjects with which he was acquainted; a veritable shopman in the stores of enlightenment, he had committed to memory patterns of all the sciences, samples or rather snippets of them. In the reign of Alexander, he wrote Liberal brochures in French;

<sup>1</sup> Homyakov. See later, Chapter 30, for Herzen's account of this leader of the Slavophil movement.—(Translator's Note.)

later on, corresponded on Greek subjects with Goethe in German. When he became Minister, he discoursed upon Slavonic poetry of the fourth century, upon which Katchenovsky observed to him that in those days our forefathers had enough to do to fight the bears, let alone singing ballads about the gods of Samothrace and the mercy of tyrants. He used to carry in his pocket, by way of a testimonial, a letter from Goethe, in which the latter paid him an extremely odd compliment, saying: 'There is no need for you to apologise for your style; you have succeeded in what I never can succeed in doing—forgetting the German grammar.'

So this actual civil Pic-de-la-Mirandole<sup>1</sup> introduced a new kind of torture. He ordered that the best students should be selected to deliver a lecture, each on his own subject, instead of the professor. The deans, of course, selected the liveliest.

These lectures went on for a whole week. The students had to prepare in all the subjects of their course, and the deans picked out the student's name and the subject by lot. Uvarov invited all the distinguished people of Moscow. Archimandrites and senators, the Governor-General and Ivan Ivanovitch Dmitriev—all were present.

I had to lecture on mineralogy in Lovetsky's place—and already he is dead!

'Where's our old comrade Langeron!

Where's our old comrade Benigsen!

You, too, are nowhere to be seen,

And you, too, might have never been!'

Alexey Leontyevitch Lovetsky was a tall, roughly-hewn, heavily-moving man with a big mouth and a large face, entirely devoid of expression. Removing in the corridor

<sup>1</sup> Pic-de-la-Mirandole (1463-1494), a learned Italian who was the most famous of all infant prodigies, a mediæval 'Admirable Crichton.'  
—(Translator's Note.)

his pea-green overcoat adorned with a number of collars of varying size, such as were worn during the First Consulate, he would begin, before entering the lecture-room, in an even, passionless voice (which was in perfect keeping with his stony subject): 'We concluded in the last lecture all that is necessary concerning the Siliceous Rocks.' Then he would sit down and go on: 'The Argillaceous Rocks . . .' He had created an invariable system for formulating the qualities of each mineral, from which he never departed; so that it sometimes happened that the characteristics were entered in the negative:

'Crystallisation—does not crystallise.

'Employment—is not employed for any purpose.

'Use—injurious to the organism. . . .'

He did not, however, avoid poetry, nor moral reflections, and every time he showed us artificial stones and told us how they were made, he added: 'Gentlemen, it's a fraud!' In dealing with husbandry, he found moral qualities in a good cock if he 'crowed well and was attentive to the hens,' and a distinct virtue in an aristocratic ram if he had 'bald knees.' He would also tell us touching tales in which flies describe how on a fine summer evening they walked about a tree and were covered with resin which turned into amber, and he always added: 'That, gentlemen, is prosopopeia!'

When the dean summoned me, the audience was rather exhausted; two mathematical lectures had reduced the listeners, who did not understand a single word, to apathy and depression. Uvarov asked for something a little livelier and for a student with a 'well-balanced tongue.' Shtchepkin pointed to me.

I mounted the platform. Lovetsky was sitting near, motionless, with his arms on his knees like a Memnon or Osiris, and was looking uneasy. I whispered to him, 'What luck that I have to lecture in your room. I won't give you away.'

‘Don’t boast when you are going into action,’ the worthy professor responded, scarcely moving his lips and not looking at me. I almost burst out laughing; but when I looked before me, there was a mist before my eyes, I felt that I was turning pale and there was a sort of dryness on my tongue. I had never spoken in public before, the lecture-room was full of students—they relied upon me; at the table below were the ‘mighty of this world’ and all the professors of our section. I picked up the question and read in an unnatural voice, ‘Crystallisation, its conditions, laws and forms.’

While I was thinking how to begin, the happy thought occurred to me that if I made a mistake, the professors might notice it, but they would not say a word, while the rest of the audience knew nothing about the subject themselves, and the students would be satisfied so long as I did not break down in the middle, because I was a favourite. And so in the name of Haüy, Werner, and Mitscherlich, I delivered my first lecture, concluding it with philosophic reflections, and all the time addressing myself to the students and not to the Minister. The students and the professors shook hands with me and thanked me. Uvarov led me off to be introduced to Prince Golitsyn and the latter said something, of which I could catch nothing but the vowel sounds. Uvarov promised me a book in honour of the occasion, but never sent it.

The second and third occasions of my appearance in public were very different. In 1836 I played the part of ‘Ugar’ in the old Russian farce, while the wife of the colonel of gendarmes was ‘Marfa,’ before all the *beau-monde* of Vyatka, including Tyufyaev. We had been rehearsing for a month, but yet my heart beat violently and my hands trembled, when a deathly silence followed the overture and the curtain began rising with

a sort of horrid shudder; Marfa and I were waiting behind the scenes. She was so sorry for me, or else so afraid that I should spoil the performance, that she gave me an immense glass of champagne, but even with that I was half dead.

After making my *début* under the auspices of a Minister of Education and a colonel of gendarmes, I appeared without any nervousness or self-conscious shyness at a Polish meeting in London and that was my third public appearance. The place of the Minister Uvarov was on that occasion filled by the ex-Minister, Ledru-Rollin.<sup>1</sup>

But is not this enough of student reminiscences? I am afraid it may be a sign of senility to linger so long over them; I will only add a few details concerning the cholera of 1831.

Cholera—the word so familiar now in Europe and so thoroughly at home in Russia that a patriotic poet calls the cholera the one faithful ally of Nicholas—was heard then for the first time in the North. Every one trembled before the terrible plague that was moving up the Volga towards Moscow. Exaggerated rumours filled the imagination with horror. The disease advanced capriciously, halting, skipping over places, and it seemed to have missed Moscow, when suddenly the terrible news, ‘The cholera is in Moscow!’ was all over the city.

In the morning a student in the political section felt ill, next day he died in the university hospital. We rushed to look at his body. He was emaciated, as though after a long illness, the eyes were sunk, the features were distorted, beside him lay a porter, who had been taken ill in the night.

We were informed that the university was to be closed. This order was read to our section by the professor of

<sup>1</sup> Ledru-Rollin (1808-1874), member of the French Provisional Government of 1848, and one of the earliest advocates of universal adult suffrage.—(*Translator's Note.*)

technology, Denisov; he was melancholy, perhaps frightened. Next morning he too died.

We assembled together from all sections in the big university courtyard; there was something touching in this crowd of young people bidden to disperse before the plague. Their faces were pale and particularly full of feeling; many were thinking of friends and relations. We said good-bye to the government scholars, who had been separated from us by quarantine measures, and were being distributed in small numbers in different houses. And at home we were all met by the stench of chloride of lime, vinegar—and a diet such as might well have laid a man up, apart from chloride and cholera.

Strange to say those gloomy days have remained as it were a time of ceremonial solemnity in my memory.

Moscow assumed quite a different aspect. The public activities, unknown at ordinary times, gave it a new life. There were fewer carriages in the streets, and gloomy crowds of people stood at the cross-roads and talked about poisoners. The conveyances that were taking the sick moved at a walking pace, escorted by police; people drew aside from black hearses with the dead. Bulletins concerning the disease were printed twice a day. The town was surrounded by a cordon as in time of war, and the soldiers shot a poor sacristan who was making his way across the river. All this absorbed men's minds, terror of the plague ousted terror of the authorities; the people murmured, and then there came one piece of news upon another, that so-and-so had been taken ill, that so-and-so had died. . . .

The Metropolitan, Filaret, arranged a universal service of prayer. On the same day and at the same hour, all the priests made the round of their parishes in procession with banners. The terrified inhabitants came out of their houses and fell on their knees, as the procession passed, praying with tears for the remission of sins. Even



the priests, accustomed to address God on intimate terms, were grave and moved. Some of them went to the Kremlin. There in the open air, surrounded by the higher clergy, knelt the Metropolitan praying that this cup might pass away. On the same spot six years before, he had held a thanksgiving for the hanging of the Decembrists.

Filaret was by way of being a high priest in opposition ; on behalf of what he was in opposition, I never could make out. Perhaps on behalf of his own personality. He was an intelligent and learned man, and a master of the Russian language, successfully introducing Church Slavonic into it ; but all this gave him no ground for opposition. The common people did not like him and called him a freemason, because he was closely associated with Prince A. N. Golitsyn and was preaching in Petersburg in the palmy days of the Bible Society. The Synod forbade his catechism being used in teaching. The clergy under his sway went in terror of his despotism ; possibly it was as rivals that Nicholas and he hated each other.

Filaret was very clever and ingenious in humiliating the temporal power ; in his sermons there was the light of that vague Christian socialism for which Lacordaire and other far-sighted Catholics were distinguished. From his exalted ecclesiastical tribune, Filaret declared that a man can never lawfully be the tool of another, that there can be nothing between men but an exchange of services, and this, he said, in a state in which half the population were slaves.

He said to the fettered convicts in the forwarding prison on the Sparrow Hills : ‘ The civil law has condemned you and drives you away, but the Church hastens after you, longing to say one more word, one more prayer for you and to give you her blessing on your journey.’ Then comforting them, he added ‘ that they, condemned

convicts, had broken with their past, that a new life lay before them, while among others (probably there were no others except officials present) there were far greater criminals,' and he quoted the example of the robber at Christ's side.

Filaret's sermon at the service on the occasion of the cholera surpassed all his other efforts; he took as his text how the angel offered David the choice of war, famine or plague as a punishment; David chose plague. The Tsar came to Moscow furious, sent the Court Minister, Prince Volkonsky, to give Filaret a good 'dressing down' and threatened to send him to be Metropolitan in Georgia. The Metropolitan meekly submitted and sent a new message to all the churches, in which he explained that they would be wrong to look in the text of his first sermon for an application to their beloved Emperor, that by David was meant ourselves defiled by sin. Of course, this made the first sermon intelligible even to those who had not grasped its meaning at first.

This was how the Metropolitan of Moscow played at opposition.

The service had as little effect on the cholera as the chloride of lime; the disease spread further and further.

I was in Paris during the severest visitation of cholera in 1849. The plague was terrible. The hot days of June helped to spread it: the poor died like flies, the tradespeople fled from Paris while others sat behind locked doors. The government, exclusively occupied with its struggles against the revolutionaries, did not think of taking active measures. The scanty collections raised for relief were insufficient for the emergency. The poor working people were left abandoned to the caprice of destiny, the hospitals had not beds enough, the police had not coffins enough, and in the houses, packed to overflowing with families, the bodies remained two or three days in inner rooms. In Moscow it was not like that.

Prince D. V. Golitsyn, at that time governor-general, a weak but honourable man, cultured and much respected, aroused the enthusiasm of Moscow society, and somehow everything was arranged in a private way, that is, without the special interference of government. A committee was formed of citizens of standing—wealthy landowners and merchants. Every member undertook one quarter of Moscow. Within a few days twenty hospitals had been opened; they did not cost the government a farthing, everything was done by subscription. Shopkeepers gave gratis everything needed for the hospitals, bedclothes, linen, and warm clothing for the patients on recovery. Young men volunteered as superintendents of the hospitals to ensure that half of these contributions should not be stolen by the attendants.

The university did its full share. The whole medical faculty, students and doctors *en masse*, put themselves at the disposal of the cholera committee; they were assigned to the different hospitals and remained there until the cholera was over. For three or four months these admirable young men lived in the hospitals as orderlies, assistants, nurses, secretaries, and all this without any remuneration and at a time when there was such an exaggerated fear of the infection. I remember one student, a Little Russian, who at the very beginning of the cholera had asked for leave of absence on account of important family affairs. Leave is rarely given in term-time, but at last he obtained it; just as he was about to set off, the students went to the hospitals. The Little Russian put his leave in his pocket and went with them. When he came out of the hospital his leave was long overdue and he was the first to laugh over his trip.

Moscow, apparently so drowsy and apathetic, so absorbed in scandal and piety, weddings, and nothing at all, always wakes up when it is necessary, and is equal to the occasion when the storm breaks over Russia.

In 1612 she was joined in blood-stained nuptials with Russia, and their union was welded in fire in 1812.

She bowed her head before Peter because the future of Russia lay in his brutal clutch. But with murmurs and disdain Moscow received within her walls the woman stained with her husband's blood, that impenitent Lady Macbeth, that Lucretia Borgia without her Italian blood, the Russian Empress of German birth<sup>1</sup>—and scowling and pouting, she quietly withdrew from Moscow.

Scowling and pouting, Napoleon waited for the keys of Moscow at the Dragomilovsky Gate, impatiently playing with his cigar-holder and tugging at his glove. He was not accustomed to enter foreign towns unescorted.

'But my Moscow came not forth,' as Pushkin says; but set fire to herself.

The cholera came and again the people's city showed itself full of heart and energy!

In August 1830, we went to Vassilyevskoe, stopped, as we always did, at the Radcliffian<sup>2</sup> castle of Perhushkovo, and, after feeding ourselves and our horses, were preparing to continue our journey. Bakay, with a towel round his waist like a belt, had already shouted: 'Off!' when a man galloped up on horseback, signalling to us to stop, and one of the Senator's postillions, covered with dust and sweat, leapt off his horse and handed my father an envelope. In the envelope was the news of the Revolution of July! There were two pages of the *Journal des Débats* which he had brought with a letter; I read them over a hundred times and got to know them by heart, and for the first time I was bored in the country.

<sup>1</sup> Catherine II., born a German princess, rose to be Empress of Russia through the murder—by her orders or with her connivance—of her husband, Peter III., to the great advantage of the country.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Radcliffe (1764-1823) wrote many stories, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italians* being the best known. All largely turn on mysterious haunted castles, and had great vogue in their day.—(Translator's Notes.)

It was a glorious time, events came quickly. Scarcely had the meagre figure of Charles x. had time to disappear behind the mists of Holyrood, when Belgium flared up, the throne of the Citizen King tottered, and a warm revolutionary spirit began to be apparent in debates and literature. Novels, plays, poems, all once more became propaganda and conflict.

At that time we knew nothing of the artificial stage-setting of the revolution in France, and we took it all for the genuine thing.

Any one who cares to see how strongly the news of the revolution of July affected the younger generation should read Heine's description of how he heard in Heligoland 'that the great Pan of the Pagans is dead.' There was no sham ardour there, Heine at thirty was as enthusiastic, as childishly excited, as we were at eighteen.

We followed step by step every word, every event, the bold questions and abrupt answers, the doings of General Lafayette, and the doings of General Lamarque; we not only knew every detail concerning them but loved all the leading men (the Radical ones, of course) and kept their portraits, from Manuel<sup>1</sup> and Benjamin Constant to Dupont de l'Eure<sup>2</sup> and Armand Carrel.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of this ferment all at once, like a bomb exploding close by, the news of the rising in Warsaw overwhelmed us. This was not far away, this was at home, and we looked at each other with tears in our eyes, repeating our favourite line :

'Nein! es sind keine leere Träume!'

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<sup>1</sup> Manuel (J. A.), a man of great independence and honesty, was expelled from the Chambre des Députés for his opposition to the war with Spain in 1823.

<sup>2</sup> Dupont de l'Eure (J. C.), a leader in the revolution of 1830, was afterwards president of the Provisional Government in 1848.

<sup>3</sup> Armand Carrel (1800-1836), as editor of *Le National*, offered spirited opposition to Charles x., as well as to aggressive acts of the government of Louis-Philippe.—(Translator's Notes.)

We rejoiced at every defeat of Dibitch ; refused to believe in the failures of the Poles, and I at once added to my shrine the portrait of Thaddeus Kosciuszko.

It was just then that I saw Nicholas for the second time and his face was still more strongly imprinted on my memory. The nobles were giving a ball in his honour. I was in the gallery of the Assembly Hall and could stare at him to my heart's content. He had not yet begun to wear a moustache. His face was still young, but the change in it since the time of the Coronation struck me. He stood morosely by a column, staring coldly and grimly before him, without looking at any one. He had grown thinner. In those features, in those pewtery eyes one could read the fate of Poland and indeed of Russia also. He was shaken, frightened, he doubted<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here is what Denis Davydov \* tells in his Memoirs :

'The Tsar said one day to A. P. Yermolov : "I was once in a very terrible position during the Polish War. My wife was expecting her confinement, the mutiny had broken out in Novgorod. I had only two squadrons of Horse Guards left me ; the news from the army only reached me through Königsberg. I was forced to surround myself with soldiers discharged from hospital."

The Memoirs of this general of partisans leave no room for doubt that Nicholas, like Araktcheyev, like all cold-hearted, cruel and revengeful people, was a coward. Here is what General Tchetchensky told Davydov : 'You know that I can appreciate manliness and so you will believe my words. I was near the Tsar on the 14th December, and I watched him all the time. I can assure you on my honour that the Tsar, who was very pale all the time, had his heart in his boots.'

And again Davydov himself tells us : 'During the riot in the Haymarket, the Tsar only visited the capital on the second day when order was restored. The Tsar was at Peterhof, and himself observed casually, "I was standing all day with Volkonsky on a mound in the garden, listening for the sound of cannon-shot from the direction of Petersburg." Instead of anxiously listening in the garden, and continually sending couriers to Petersburg,' added

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\* Davydov (see Tolstoy's *War and Peace*) and Yermolov were both leaders of the partisan or guerilla warfare against the French in 1812.—(Translator's Note.)



the security of his throne and was ready to revenge himself for what he had suffered, for his fear and his doubts.

With the pacification of Poland all the restrained malignancy of the man was let loose. Soon we, too, felt it.

The network of espionage cast about the university from the beginning of the reign began to be drawn tighter. In 1832 a Pole who was a student in our section was a victim. Sent to the university as a government scholar, not at his own initiative, he had been put in our course; we made friends with him; he was discreet and melancholy in his behaviour, we never heard a rash word from him, but we never heard a word of weakness either. One morning he was missing from the lectures, next day he was missing still. We began to make inquiries; the government scholars told us in secret that he had been fetched away at night, that he had been summoned before the authorities, and then people had come for his papers and belongings and had told them not to speak of it. There the matter ended, *we never heard anything of the fate of this luckless young man.*<sup>1</sup>

A few months passed when suddenly there was a report in the lecture-room that several students had been seized

Davydov, 'he ought to have hastened there himself; any one of the least manliness would have done so. On the following day (when everything was quiet) the Tsar rode in his carriage into the crowd, which filled the square, and shouted to it, "On your knees!" and the crowd hurriedly obeyed the order. The Tsar, seeing several people dressed in parti-coloured clothes (among those following the carriage), imagined that they were suspicious characters, and ordered the poor wretches to be taken to the lock-up and, turning to the people, began shouting: "They are all wretched Poles, they have egged you on." Such an ill-timed sally completely ruined the effect in my opinion.'

A strange sort of bird was this Nicholas!

<sup>1</sup> And where are the Kritskys? What had they done? Who tried them? For what were they condemned?



in the night; among them were Kostenetsky, Kolreif, Antonovitch and others; we knew them well, they were all excellent fellows. Kolreif, the son of a Protestant pastor, was an extremely gifted musician. A court-martial was appointed to try them; this meant in plain language that they were doomed to perish. We were all in a fever of suspense to know what would happen to them, but from the first they too vanished without trace. The storm that was crushing the rising blades of corn was everywhere. We no longer had a foreboding of its approach, we felt it, we saw it, and we huddled closer and closer together.

The danger strung up our tense nerves, made our hearts beat faster and made us love each other with greater devotion. There were five of us at first and now we met Vadim Passek.

In Vadim there was a great deal that was new to us. We had all with slight variations had a similar bringing up, that is, we knew nothing but Moscow and our country estates, we had all learned out of the same books, had lessons from the same tutors, and been educated at home or at a boarding-school preparatory for the university. Vadim had been born in Siberia during his father's exile, in the midst of want and privation. His father had been himself his teacher. He had grown up in a large family of brothers and sisters, under a crushing weight of poverty but in complete freedom. Siberia had put its imprint on him, which was quite unlike our provincial stamp; he was far from being so vulgar and petty, he was distinguished by more sturdiness and a tougher fibre. Vadim was a savage in comparison with us. His daring was of another kind, unlike ours, more that of the *bogatyr*, and sometimes conceited; the aristocracy of misfortune had developed a peculiar self-respect in him; but he knew how to love others too, and gave himself to them without stint. He was bold

—even reckless to excess—a man born in Siberia, and in an exiled family too, has an advantage over us in not being afraid of Siberia.

Vadim from family tradition hated the autocracy with his whole soul, and he took us to his heart as soon as we met. We made friends very quickly. Though, indeed, at that time, there was neither ceremony nor reasonable precaution, nothing like it, to be seen in our circle.

‘Would you like to make the acquaintance of Ketscher, of whom you have heard so much?’ Vadim said to me.

‘I certainly should.’

‘Come to-morrow, then, at seven o’clock; don’t be late, he’ll be with me.’

I went—Vadim was not at home. A tall man with an expressive face and a good-naturedly menacing look behind his spectacles was waiting for him. I took up a book, he took up a book. ‘But perhaps you,’ he said as he opened it, ‘perhaps you are Herzen?’

‘Yes; and you Ketscher?’

A conversation began and grew more and more eager. . . .

And from that minute (which may have been about the end of 1831) we were inseparable friends; from that minute the anger and sweetness, the laugh and shout of Ketscher have resounded at all the stages, in all the incidents of our life.

Our meeting with Vadim introduced a new element into our fraternity.

We met as before most frequently at Ogaryov’s. His invalid father had gone to live on his estate in Penza. Ogaryov lived alone on the lowest storey of their house at the Nikitsky Gate. This was not far from the University, and all were particularly attracted there. Ogaryov had that magnetic attraction which forms the first thread of crystallisation in every mass of casually meeting atoms, if only they have some affinity. Wherever

such men are flung down, they imperceptibly become the heart of the organism.

But besides his bright, cheerful room, furnished with red and gold striped hangings, always haunted by the smoke of cigars and the smell of punch and other—I was going to say—edibles and beverages, but I stopped, because there rarely were any edibles except cheese—well, besides Ogaryov's ultra-student-like abode where we argued for nights together, and sometimes caroused for nights also, another house, in which almost for the first time we learnt to respect family life, became more and more our favourite resort.

Vadim often left our conversations and went off home; he missed his mother and sisters if he did not see them for long together. To us who lived heart and soul in comradeship, it was strange that he could prefer his family to our company.

He introduced us to it. In that family everything bore traces of the Tsar's *persecution*; only yesterday it had come from Siberia, it was ruined, harassed, and at the same time full of that dignity which misfortune lays, not upon every sufferer, but on the faces of those who have known how to bear it.

Their father had been seized in the reign of Paul in consequence of some political treachery, flung into the Schlüsselburg and exiled to Siberia. Alexander brought back thousands of those exiled by his insane father, but Passek was forgotten. He was the nephew of that Passek who took part in the murder of Peter III., and who was afterwards governor-general in the Polish provinces, and he might have claimed part of an inheritance which had already passed into other hands, and it was those 'other hands' which kept him in Siberia.

While in the Schlüsselburg Passek married the daughter of one of the officers in the garrison there. The young girl knew that things would go hard with

her, but she was not deterred by fear of exile. At first they struggled on somehow in Siberia, selling the last of their belongings, but their poverty grew more and more terrible, and the more rapidly so as their family increased. Weighed down by privation, by hard work, deprived of warm clothing and at times even of bread, they yet succeeded in coming through and in bringing up a whole family of young lions; the father transmitted to them his proud, indomitable spirit and faith in himself, the secret of fortitude in misfortune; he educated them by his example, the mother by her self-sacrifice and bitter tears. The sisters were in no way inferior to the brothers in heroic fortitude. Yes—why be afraid of words—they were a family of heroes. What they had all borne for one another, what they had done for the family was incredible, and always with head erect, not in the least crushed.

In Siberia the three sisters had only one pair of shoes; they used to keep them for going walks, that strangers might not see the extremity of their need.

At the beginning of 1826 Passek received permission to return to Russia. It was winter, and it was no easy matter to move with such a family, without fur-coats, without money, from the province of Tobolsk, while on the other hand the heart yearned for Russia: exile is more than ever insufferable after it is over. Our martyrs struggled back somehow; a peasant woman, who had nursed one of the children during the mother's illness, brought her hard-earned savings to help them on the way, asking only that they would take her too; the drivers brought them to the Russian frontier for a trifle, or for nothing; some of the family walked while others were driven, and the young people took turns; so they made the long winter journey from the Urals to Moscow. Moscow was the dream of the young ones, their hope—and there hunger awaited them.

While forgiving Passek, the government never thought of returning him some part of his property. Exhausted by his efforts and privations, the old man took to his bed ; they knew not where to find bread for the morrow.

At that moment Nicholas celebrated his coronation, banquet followed upon banquet, Moscow was like a heavily decorated ballroom, everywhere lights, shields, and gay attire. . . . The two elder sisters, without consulting any one, wrote a petition to Nicholas, describing the position of the family, and begged him to inquire into the case and restore their property. They left the house secretly in the morning and went to the Kremlin, squeezing their way to the front, and awaited the Tsar, 'crowned and exalted on high.' When Nicholas came down the steps of the red staircase, the two girls quietly stepped forward and offered the petition. He passed by, pretending not to see them ; an aide-de-camp took the paper and the police led them away.

Nicholas was about thirty at the time and already was capable of such heartlessness. This coldness, this caution is characteristic of little commonplace natures, cashiers, and petty clerks. I have often noticed this unyielding firmness of character in postal officials, salesmen of theatre and railway tickets, and people who are continually bothered and interrupted at every minute. They learn not to see a man, though he is standing by. But how did this autocratic clerk train himself not to see, and what need had he not to be a minute late for a function ?

The girls were kept in custody until evening. Frightened and insulted, they besought the police superintendent to let them go home, where their absence must have upset the whole family. Nothing was done about the petition.

The father could endure no more, his sufferings had been too great ; he died. The children were left with their mother, struggling on from day to day. The

greater the need, the harder the sons worked ; all three finished their university course brilliantly and took their degrees. The two elder ones went off to Petersburg ; there, being excellent mathematicians, they gave lessons in addition to their work in the service (one in the Admiralty and the other in the Engineers) and, denying themselves everything, sent the money they earned home to the family.

I vividly remember the old mother in her dark gown and white cap ; her thin, pale face was covered with wrinkles, she looked far older than she was, only her eyes retained something of her youth ; so much gentleness, love, anxiety, and so many past tears could be seen in them. She adored her children ; she was rich, famous, young in them ; with deep and devout feeling she spoke of them in her weak voice, which sometimes broke and quivered with suppressed tears.

When they were all gathered together in Moscow and sitting round their simple repast, the old woman was beside herself with joy ; she walked round the table, looked after their wants, and, suddenly stopping, would gaze at all her young people with such pride, with such happiness, and then lift her eyes to me as though asking : ‘ They really are fine, aren’t they ? ’ At such times I longed to throw myself on her neck and kiss her hands ; and, moreover, they really were all of them very handsome, too.

She was happy then, why did she not die at one of those dinners ? . . .

In two years, she had lost the three elder sons. One died, gloriously, his heroism acknowledged by his enemies in the midst of victory and glory, though it was not for his own cause he sacrificed his life. He was the young general killed by the Circassians at Dargo. Laurels do not heal a mother’s grief. . . . The others did not have so happy an end ; the hardness of Russian life weighed

upon them, weighed upon them till it crushed them. Poor mother ! and poor Russia !

Vadim died in February 1843. I was with him at the end, and for the first time looked upon the death of a man dear to me, and at the same time death in its full horror, in all its meaningless fortuitousness, in all its blind, immoral injustice.

Ten years before his death Vadim married my cousin<sup>1</sup> and I was best man at his wedding. Married life and the change in his habits parted us somewhat. He was happy in his private life, but unfortunate in his outward circumstances, and unsuccessful in his undertakings. Not long before our arrest, he went to Harkov, where he had been promised a lecturer's chair at the university. His going there saved him indeed from prison, but his name was not forgotten by the police. Vadim was refused the post. The assistant-director admitted to him that they had received a document by which they were forbidden to give him the chair, on account of connections with evilly-disposed persons of which the government had obtained knowledge.

Vadim was left without a post, that is, without bread—that was his Vyatka.

We were exiled. Relations with us were dangerous. Black years of poverty followed for him ; in seven years of struggle to get a bare living, in mortifying contact with coarse and heartless people, far from friends and from all possibility of corresponding with them, his health gave way.

‘ Once we had spent all our money to the last farthing,’ his wife told me afterwards ; ‘ on the previous evening I had tried to get hold of ten roubles somehow, but had not succeeded. I had already borrowed from every one from whom it was possible to borrow a little. In the

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Tatyana Kutchin, the ‘cousin from Kortcheva,’ mentioned in Chapter 3.—(*Translator's Note.*)



shops they refused to give us provisions except for cash, we thought of nothing but what would the children have to eat next day. Vadim sat gloomily by the window, then he got up, took his hat and said he would like a walk. I saw that he was very much depressed; I felt frightened, but still I was glad that he should distract his mind a little. When he was gone I flung myself on the bed and wept very bitterly, then I began thinking what to do—everything we had of the slightest value, our rings and our spoons, had long ago been pawned; I saw no resource left but to apply to my people and beg their bitter, cold assistance. Meanwhile Vadim wandered aimlessly about the streets and so reached Petrovsky Boulevard. As he passed by Shiryaev's shop it occurred to him to inquire whether the bookseller had sold even one copy of his book; he had been in the shop five days before, but had found nothing for him; he walked despondently into the shop.

'Very glad to see you,' Shiryaev said to him, 'there is a letter from our Petersburg agent, he has sold three hundred roubles' worth of your book; would you like to have the money?' And Shiryaev counted him out fifteen gold roubles. Vadim lost his head in his delight, rushed into the first restaurant for provisions, bought a bottle of wine and fruit and dashed home in a cab in triumph. At the moment I was watering the remainder of some broth for the children, and was meaning to put a little aside for him and to assure him that I had already had some, when he suddenly came in with the parcel and the bottle, gay and joyous.' And she sobbed and could not utter another word.

After my exile I met him casually in Petersburg and found him very much changed. He kept his convictions, but he kept them like a warrior who will not let the sword drop out of his hand, though he feels that he is wounded to death. He was by then exhausted and looked coldly

into the future. So, too, I found him in Moscow in 1842, his circumstances had somewhat improved, his work had begun to be appreciated; but all this came too late—it was like the epaulettes of Polezhaev or the release of Kolreif—granted not by the Russian Tsar but by Russian life.

Vadim was wasting away; in the autumn of 1842 tuberculosis was discovered, that terrible disease which I was destined to see once again.

A month before his death I began to notice with horror that his mental faculties were growing dimmer and weaker, like candles smouldering out and leaving the room darker and gloomier. Soon it was with difficulty and effort that he could find the words for incoherent speech, then he scarcely spoke at all and only inquired anxiously for his medicines and whether it was not time to take them.

At three o'clock one night in February, Vadim's wife sent for me; the sick man was very bad, he had asked for me. I went in to him and gently took his hand, his wife mentioned my name; he gazed long and wearily at me but did not recognise me and closed his eyes. The children were brought in; he looked at them but I think did not recognise them either. His moaning became more painful, he would subside for minutes and then suddenly give a prolonged sigh and groan; then a bell pealed in a neighbouring church, Vadim listened and said, 'That's matins,' after that he did not utter another word. . . . His wife knelt sobbing by the dead man's bedside; a good, kind lad, one of their university comrades, who had been looking after him of late, bustled about, moving back the medicine table, raising the curtains. . . . I went away—it was bright and frosty, the rising sun shone brilliantly on the snow as though something good had happened; I went to order the coffin.

When I went back a deathlike stillness reigned in the

little house, the dead man in accordance with Russian custom lay on a table in the drawing-room, at a little distance from it sat his friend, the artist Rabus, making a pencil sketch of him through his tears ; beside the dead man stood a tall woman with silently folded arms and an expression of infinite sorrow ; no artist could have moulded a nobler and finer figure of grief. The woman was not young, but retained traces of a stern, majestic beauty ; she stood motionless, wrapped in a long black velvet cloak lined with ermine fur.

I stopped in the doorway.

Two or three minutes passed in the same stillness, when all at once she bent down, warmly kissed the dead man on the forehead, and said, ' Farewell ! farewell, friend Vadim,' and with resolute steps walked into the inner rooms. Rabus went on drawing, he nodded to me, we had no inclination to speak. I sat down by the window in silence.

That woman was Madame E. Tchertkov, the sister of Count Zahar Tchernyshev, exiled for the Fourteenth of December.

The Simonovsky archimandrite, Melhisedek, of his own accord offered a grave within the precincts of his monastery. Melhisedek had once been a humble carpenter and a desperate dissenter, had afterwards gone back to orthodoxy, become a monk, been made Father Superior and afterwards archimandrite. With all that, he remained a carpenter, that is, he kept his heart and his broad shoulders and his red, healthy face. He knew Vadim and respected him for his historical researches concerning Moscow.

When the dead man's body arrived before the monastery gates, they were opened and Melhisedek came out with all the monks to meet the martyr's poor coffin with soft, mournful chanting, and to follow it to the grave. Not far from Vadim's grave lie the ashes of another dear

friend, Venevitinov,<sup>1</sup> with the inscription 'How well he knew life, how little he lived!' How well Vadim, too, knew life!

This was not enough for fate. Why did the old mother live so long? She had seen the end of their exile, had seen her children in all the beauty of their youth, in all the brilliance of their talent, what more had she to live for! Who prizes happiness should seek an early death. Happiness that lasts is no more to be found than ice which never melts.

Vadim's eldest brother died a few months after the second, Diomid, had been killed; he caught cold, neglected his illness, and his undermined organism succumbed. He was barely forty and he was the eldest.

These three graves of three friends cast long dark shadows over the past; the last months of my youth are seen through funeral crape and the smoke of incense. . . .

A year passed, the trial of my university comrades was over. They were found guilty (just as we were later on, and later still the Petrashevsky group<sup>2</sup>) of a design to form a secret society, and of criminal conversations; for this they were sent as common soldiers to Orenburg. Nicholas made an exception of one of them, Sungurov. He had completed his studies and was in the service, married and had children. He was condemned to deprivation of rights of property and exile to Siberia.

'What could a handful of young students do, they ruined themselves for nothing!' All that is very sensible, and people who argue in that way ought to be

<sup>1</sup> Venevitinov, a young poet whose few poems showed the greatest promise. He died at the age of seventeen.

<sup>2</sup> The members of the Petrashevsky group, of whom Dostoevsky was one, were condemned to death, and led out to the scaffold. At the last moment their sentence was transmuted to penal servitude in Siberia.—(*Translator's Notes.*)

gratified at the *good sense* of the young generation that followed us. After our affair which followed that of Sungurov, fifteen years passed in tranquillity before the Petrashevsky affair, and it was those fifteen years from which Russia is only just beginning to recover and by which two generations were ruined, the elder lost in debauchery, and the younger, poisoned from childhood, whose sickly representatives we are seeing to-day.

After the Decembrists, all attempts to form societies were, indeed, unsuccessful; the scantiness of our forces and the vagueness of our aims pointed to the necessity for another kind of work—preparatory, spiritual. All that is true.

But what would young men be made of who could wait for solutions to theoretical problems while calmly looking on at what was being done around them, at the hundreds of Poles clanking their fetters on the Vladimir Road, at serfdom, at the soldiers flogged in the Hodynsky Field by some General Lashkevitch, at fellow-students lost and never heard of again? For the moral purification of the generation, as a pledge of the future, they were bound to be so indignant as to be senseless in their attempts and disdainful of danger. The savage punishments inflicted on boys of sixteen or seventeen served as a terrible lesson and in a way a hardening process; the cruel blows aimed at every one of us by a heartless monster dispelled for good all rosy hopes of indulgence for youth. It was dangerous to jest with Liberalism, and no one could dream of playing at conspiracy. For one carelessly concealed tear over Poland, for one boldly uttered word, there were years of exile, of the white strap,<sup>1</sup> and sometimes even of the fortress; that was why it was important that those words were uttered and that those tears were shed. Young people perished some-

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, of supervision by the secret police, whose light-blue uniform was worn with a white strap.—(Translator's Note.)

times, but they perished without checking the mental activity that was solving the sphinx riddle of Russian life, indeed they even justified its hope.

Our turn came now. Our names were already on the list of the secret police. The first play of the light-blue cat with the mouse began as follows.

When our condemned comrades were being sent off to Orenburg by *étape*, on foot without sufficient warm clothing, Ogaryov in our circle, I. Kireyevsky in his, got up subscriptions. All the condemned men were without money. Kireyevsky brought the money collected to the commander, Staal, a good-natured old man of whom I shall have more to say later. Staal promised to give the money and asked Kireyevsky, 'But what are these lists for?' 'The names of those who subscribed,' answered Kireyevsky, 'and the amounts.' 'You do believe that I will give them the money?' asked the old man. 'Of course.' 'And I imagine that those who have given it to you trust you. And so what is the use of our keeping their names?' With these words Staal threw the lists into the fire, and, of course, he did very well.

Ogaryov himself took the money to the barracks, and this went off without a hitch, but the prisoners took it into their heads to send their thanks from Orenburg to their comrades, and, as a government official was going to Moscow, they seized the opportunity and asked him to take a letter, which they were afraid to trust to the post. The official did not fail to take advantage of this rare chance for proving all the ardour of his loyal sentiments and presented the letter to the general of gendarmes in Moscow.

The general of gendarmes at this time was Lissovsky, who was appointed to the post when A. A. Volkov went out of his mind imagining that the Poles wanted to offer him the crown of Poland (an ironical trick of destiny to

send a general of gendarmes mad over the crown of the Jagellons !<sup>1</sup>).

Lissovsky, himself a Pole, was neither spiteful nor ill-disposed : having wasted his property over cards and a French actress, he philosophically preferred the place of general of gendarmes in Moscow to a place in the debtors' prison of the same city.

Lissovsky summoned Ogaryov, Ketscher, S. Vadim, I. Obolensky and others, and charged them with being in relations with political criminals. On Ogaryov's observing that he had not written to any one, and that if any one had written to him he could not be responsible for it, and that, moreover, no letter had reached him, Lissovsky answered : ' You got up a subscription for them, *that's still worse*. As it is the first offence the Sovereign is *so merciful* as to *pardon* you ; only I warn you, gentlemen, a strict supervision will be kept over you ; be careful.'

Lissovsky looked round at all with a significant glance, and his eyes resting upon Ketscher, who was taller and a little older than the rest and who raised his eyebrows so fiercely, he added : ' You, my good sir, ought to be ashamed in your position.' It might have been supposed that Ketscher was vice-chancellor of the Russian Heraldry Office, while as a matter of fact he was only a humble district doctor.

I was not sent for, probably my name was not in the letter.

This threat was like a promotion, a consecration, a winning of our spurs. Lissovsky's advice threw oil on the fire, and as though to make their future task easier for the police we put on velvet *bérets à la Karl Sand*<sup>2</sup> and tied tricolor scarves round our necks.

<sup>1</sup> The dynasty of kings of Poland from 1386 to 1572.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Sand, a student of Jena University, who in 1819 assassinated the German dramatist Kotzebue, because he threw ridicule on the Burschenschaft movement.—(*Translator's Notes*.)



Colonel Shubensky, who was quietly and softly with velvet steps creeping into Lissovsky's place, pounced upon his weakness with us; we were to serve him for a step in his promotion—and we did so serve him.

But first I will add a few words concerning the fate of Sungurov and his companions. Nicholas let Kolreif return ten years later from Orenburg, where his regiment was stationed. He pardoned him on the ground of his being in consumption, just as, because he was in consumption, Polezhaev was promoted to be an officer, and because he was dead Bestuzhev was given a cross. Kolreif returned to Moscow and died in the arms of his old, grief-stricken father.

Kostenetsky distinguished himself in the Caucasus and was promoted to the rank of an officer. It was the same with Antonovitch. The fate of the luckless Sungurov was incomparably more dreadful. On reaching the first étape on the Sparrow Hills, Sungurov asked leave from the officer in charge to go out into the fresh air, as the hut, packed to overflowing with exiles, was suffocating. The officer, a young man of twenty, went out himself into the road with him. Sungurov, choosing a favourable moment, turned off the road and disappeared. Probably he knew the locality well. He succeeded in getting away from the officer, but next day the gendarmes got on his track. When Sungurov saw that it was impossible to escape, he cut his throat. The gendarmes took him to Moscow unconscious and losing blood.

The unfortunate officer was degraded to the ranks.

Sungurov did not die. He was tried again, this time not as a political prisoner, but as a runaway convict: half his head was shaved: it is an original method (probably inherited from the Tatars) in use for preventing escapes and it shows even more than corporal punishment the complete contempt for human dignity of the Russian legislature. To this external disgrace the

sentence added one stroke of the lash within the walls of the prison. Whether this sentence was carried out I do not know. After that, Sungurov was sent to Nertchinsk to the mines.

I heard his name pronounced once more and then it vanished for ever.

In Vyatka I once met in the street a young doctor, a fellow-student at the university, who was on his way to some post in a factory. We talked of old days and common acquaintances.

‘My God!’ said the doctor, ‘do you know whom I saw on my way here in the Nizhni-Novgorod Province? I was sitting in the posting station waiting for horses. It was very nasty weather. An *étape* officer, in charge of a party of convicts, came in to get warm. We got into conversation; hearing that I was a doctor, he asked me to go to the *étape* to look at one of the convicts and see whether he were shamming or really were seriously ill. I went, of course, with the intention of declaring in any case that the convict was ill. In the small *étape* there were eighty men in chains, shaven and unshaven, women and children; they all moved apart as the officer went up, and we saw, lying on straw in a corner on the dirty floor, a figure wrapped in a convict’s greatcoat.

“‘This is the invalid,” said the officer.

‘I had no need to lie, the poor wretch was in a high fever; emaciated and exhausted by prison and the journey, with half his head shaven and his beard uncut, he looked terrible as he stared about aimlessly, and continually asked for water.

“‘Well, brother, are you very bad?’” I said to the sick man, and added to the officer: “it is impossible for him to go on.”

‘The sick man fixed his eyes upon me and muttered “Is that you?”—he mentioned my name. “You don’t

know me?" he added in a voice which went to my heart like a knife.

"Forgive me," I said, taking his dry and burning hand, "I can't recall you."

"I am Sungurov," he answered.

'Poor Sungurov!' repeated the doctor, shaking his head.

'Well, did they leave him?' I asked.

'No, but they got a cart for him.'

After I had written this I learned that Sungurov died at Nertchinsk. His property which consisted of two hundred and fifty souls in the Bronnitsky district near Moscow, and four hundred souls in the Arzamas district of the Nizhni-Novgorod Province, *went to pay for the keep of him and his comrades in prison while awaiting trial.*

His family was ruined; the first care of the authorities, however, was to diminish it. *Sungurov's wife was seized with her two children, and spent six months in the Pretchistensky prison, and her baby died there. May the rule of Nicholas be damned for ever and ever! Amen!*

## Chapter 7

THE END OF MY STUDIES—THE SCHILLER PERIOD—  
EARLY YOUTH AND BOHEMIANISM—SAINT-SIMONISM  
AND N. POLEVOY

**B**EFORE the storm had broken over our heads my time at the university was coming to an end. The ordinary anxieties, the nights without sleep spent in trying to learn useless things by heart, the superficial study in a hurry and the thought of the examination stifling all interest in science—all that was as it always is. I wrote a dissertation on astronomy for the gold medal, but only got the silver one. I am certain that I am incapable of understanding now what I wrote then, and that it was worth its weight—in silver.

It sometimes happens to me to dream that I am a student going in for an examination—I think with horror how much I have forgotten and feel that I shall be plucked,—and I wake up rejoicing from the bottom of my heart that the sea and passports, and years and crimes cut me off from the university, that no one is going to torture me, and no one dare give me a disgusting minimum. And, indeed, the professors would be surprised that I should have gone so far back in so few years. One did, indeed, express this to me.<sup>1</sup>

After the final examination the professors shut themselves up to reckon the marks, while we, excited by hopes

<sup>1</sup> In 1844, I met Perevoshtchikov at Shtchepkin's and sat beside him at dinner. Towards the end he could not resist saying: 'It is a pity, a very great pity, that circumstances prevented you from taking up work, you had excellent abilities.'

'But you know it's not for every one to follow you up to heaven. We are busy here on earth at work of some sort.'

'Upon my word, to be sure that may be work of a sort. Hegelian philosophy perhaps. I have read your articles, there is no understanding them; bird's language, that's queer sort of work. No, indeed!'

For a long while I was amused at this verdict, that is, for a long

and doubts, hung about the corridors and entrance in little groups. Sometimes some one would come out of the council-room. We rushed to learn our fate, but for a long time it was not settled. At last Heiman came out. 'I congratulate you,' he said to me, 'you are a graduate. 'Who else, who else?' 'So-and-so, and So-and-so.' I felt at once sad and gay; as I went out at the university gates I thought that I should not go out at them again as I had yesterday and every day; I was shut out of the university, of that common home where I had spent four years, so youthfully and so well; on the other hand I was comforted by the feeling of being accepted as completely grown-up, and, why not admit it? by the title of graduate I had gained all at once.<sup>1</sup>

Alma Mater! I am so greatly indebted to the university, and lived in its life and with it so long after I had finished my studies, that I cannot think of it without love and respect. It cannot charge me with ingratitude, though in relation with the university gratitude is easy, it is inseparable from the love and bright memories of youth . . . and I send it my blessing from this far-off foreign land!

The year we spent after taking our degrees made a glorious end to early youth. It was one prolonged feast while I could not understand that our language really was poor; if it were a bird's, it must have been the bird that was Minerva's favourite.

<sup>1</sup> Among the papers sent me from Moscow, I found a note in which I informed my cousin who was in the country that I had taken my degree. 'The examination is over, and I am a graduate! You cannot imagine the sweet feeling of freedom after four years of work. Did you think of me on Thursday? It was a stifling day, and the torture lasted from nine in the morning till nine in the evening.' (26th June 1833.) I fancy I added two hours for effect or to round off the sentence. But for all my pleasure, my vanity was stung by another student's winning the gold medal. In a second letter of the 6th July, I find: 'To-day was the prize-giving, but I was not there. I did not care to be second at the giving of the medals.'

of friendship, exchange of ideas, inspiration, carousing. . . .

A little group of university friends who had succeeded in surviving did not part, but went on living in their common sympathies and fancies, and no one thought of his material prospects or future career. I should not think well of this in men of mature age, but I prize it in the young. Youth when it has not been sapped by the moral corruption of petty-bourgeois ideas is everywhere impractical, and is especially bound to be so in a young country which is full of such great strivings and has attained so little. Moreover, to be impractical need not imply anything false, everything turned toward the future is bound to have a share of idealism. If it were not for the impractical characters, all the practical people would remain at the same dull stage of perpetual repetition.

Some enthusiasm preserves a man from real degradation far more than all the moral admonitions in the world. I remember youthful orgies, moments of revelry that sometimes went beyond bounds, but I do not remember one really immoral affair in our circle, nothing of which a man would have to feel seriously ashamed, which he would try to forget and conceal. Everything was done openly, and what is bad is rarely done openly. Half, more than half, of the heart was turned away from idle sensuality and morbid egoism, which concentrate on impure thoughts and accentuate vice.

I consider it a great misfortune for a nation when their young generation has no youth; we have already observed that being young is not enough. The most grotesque period of German student life is a hundred times better than the petty-bourgeois maturity of young men in France and England. To my mind the elderly Americans of fifteen are simply disgusting.

In France there was at one time a brilliant aristocratic

youth, and later on a brilliant revolutionary youth. All the St. Justs<sup>1</sup> and Hoches,<sup>2</sup> Marceaux and Desmoulins,<sup>3</sup> the heroic children who grew up on the gloomy poetry of Jean-Jacques, were real youth. The Revolution was the work of young men, neither Danton nor Robespierre nor Louis XVI. himself outlived their thirty-fifth year. With Napoleon the young men were turned into orderlies, with the Restoration, 'the revival of old age,'—youth was utterly incompatible—everything became mature, businesslike, that is, petty-bourgeois.

The last youths of France were the Saint-Simonists and the Fourierists. The few exceptions cannot alter the prosaically dull character of French youth. Escousse and Lebras<sup>4</sup> shot themselves because they were young in a society of old men. Others struggled like fish thrown out of the water on to the muddy bank, till some fell at the barricades, others were caught in the Jesuit snares.

But since youth asserts its rights, the greater number of young Frenchmen work off their youth in a Bohemian period, that is, if they have no money, live in little cafés with little grisettes in the Quartier Latin, and in grand cafés with grand lorettes, if they have money. Instead of a Schiller period, they have a Paul de Kock period ;

<sup>1</sup> St. Just was a member of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety, a follower of Robespierre and beheaded with him at the age of twenty-seven.

<sup>2</sup> Hoche and Marceau were generals of the French Revolutionary Army. Both were engaged in the pacification of La Vendée. Both perished before reaching the age of thirty.

<sup>3</sup> Desmoulins was one of the early leaders of the French Revolution, and headed the attack on the Bastille ; afterwards accused of being a Moderate and beheaded together with Danton at the age of thirty-four.

<sup>4</sup> Escousse (b. 1813) and Lebras (b. 1816) were poets who wrote in collaboration a successful play, *Farruck le Maure*, followed by an unsuccessful one called *Raymond*. On the failure of the latter they committed suicide in 1832. Béranger wrote a poem on them.—(*Translator's Notes*.)



in it, strength, energy, everything young is rapidly and rather wretchedly wasted and the man is ready—for a *commis* in a commercial house. The Bohemian period leaves at the bottom of the soul one passion only—the thirst for money, and the whole future is sacrificed to it, there are no other interests; these practical people laugh at theoretical questions and despise women (the result of numerous conquests over those whose trade it is to be conquered). As a rule, the Bohemian period is passed under the guidance of some worn-out sinner, of some faded celebrity, *d'un vieux prostitué*, living at some one else's expense, an actor who has lost his voice, or a painter whose hands tremble, and he is the model who is imitated in accent, in dress, and above all in a haughty view of human affairs and a profound understanding of good fare.

In England the Bohemian period is replaced by a paroxysm of charming originalities and amiable eccentricities. For instance, senseless tricks, absurd squandering of money, ponderous practical jokes, heavy, but carefully concealed vice, profitless trips to Calabria or Quito, to the North and to the South—with horses, dogs, races, and stuffy dinners by the way, then a wife and an enormous number of fat and rosy babies; business transactions, the *Times*, Parliament, and the old port which weighs them to the earth.

We played pranks too and we caroused, but the fundamental tone was not the same, the diapason was too elevated. Mischief and dissipation never became our goal. Our goal was faith in our vocation; supposing that we were mistaken, still, believing it as a fact, we respected in ourselves and in each other the instruments of the common cause. And in what did our feasts and orgies consist? Suddenly it would occur to us that in another two days it would be the sixth of December, St. Nikolay's day. The supply of Nikolays was terrific,

Nikolay Ogaryov, Nikolay S——, Nikolay Ketscher, Nikolay Sazonov. . . .

‘I say, who is going to celebrate the name-day?’

‘I! I! . . .’

‘I will next day then.’

‘That’s all nonsense, what’s the good of next day? We will keep it in common, by subscription! And what a feast it will be!’

‘Yes! yes! at whose rooms are we to assemble?’

‘S—— is ill, so it’s clear it must be at his.’

And so plans and calculations are made, and it is incredibly absorbing for the future guests and hosts. One Nikolay drives off to Yar’s to order supper, another to Materne’s for cheese and salami. Wine, of course, is bought in Petrovka from Depré’s, on whose price-list Ogaryov wrote the epigram:

‘De près ou de loin,  
Mais je fournis toujours.’

Our inexperienced taste went no further than champagne, and was so young that we sometimes even preferred *Rivesaltes mousseux* to champagne. I once saw the name on a wine-list in Paris, remembered 1833 and tried a bottle, but, alas, even my memories did not help me to drink more than a glass.

Before the festive day, the wines would be tried, and so it would be necessary to send a messenger for more, as it appeared they were liked.

While we are on the subject, I cannot refrain from describing what happened to Sokolovsky. He was perpetually without money and immediately spent everything he received. A year before his arrest, he arrived in Moscow and stayed with S——. He had, I remember, succeeded in selling the manuscript of *Heveri*, and so resolved to give a feast not only for us but also *pour les gros bonnets*, i.e. invited Polevoy, Maximovitch,

and others. On the morning of the previous day, he set out with Polezhaev, who was at that time in Moscow with his regiment, to make purchases, bought cups and even a samovar and all sorts of unnecessary things and finally wines and eatables, that is, pasties, stuffed turkeys, and so on. In the evening we arrived at S——'s. Sokolovsky suggested uncorking one bottle, and then another, and by the end of the evening, it appeared that there was no more wine and no more money. Sokolovsky had spent everything he had left over after paying some small debts. Sokolovsky was mortified, but controlled his feeling; he thought and thought, then wrote to the *gros bonnets* that he had been taken seriously ill and was putting off the feast.

For the celebration of the four name-days, I wrote out a complete programme, which was deemed worthy of the special attention of the inquisitor Golitsyn, who asked me at the committee whether the programme had really been carried out.

'*À la lettre,*' I replied. He shrugged his shoulders as though he had spent his whole life in the Smolny Convent or keeping Good Friday.

After supper as a rule a vital question, a question that aroused controversy arose, *i.e.* how to prepare the punch. Other things were usually eaten and drunk in good faith, like the voting in Parliament, without dispute, but in this every one must have a hand and, moreover, it was after supper. . . . 'Light it—don't light it yet—light it how?—put it out with champagne or Sauterne?—put the fruit and pineapple in while it is burning or afterwards?'

'Evidently when it is burning, and then the whole aroma will go into punch.'

'But, I say, the pineapple will swim, the edges will be scorched, it is simply a waste.'

'That's all nonsense,' Ketscher would shout louder

than all, 'but what's not nonsense is that you must put out the candles.'

The candles were put out; all the faces looked blue, and the features seemed to quiver with the movement of the flame. And meantime the temperature in the little room was becoming tropical. Every one was thirsty and the punch was not ready. But Joseph the Frenchman sent from Yar's was ready; he had prepared something, the antithesis of punch, an iced beverage of various wines *à la base de cognac*. A genuine son of the '*grand peuple*,' he explained to us, as he put in the French wine, that it was so good because it had twice passed the Equator. '*Oui, oui, messieurs, deux fois l'équateur, messieurs!*'

When the beverage remarkable for its arctic iciness had been finished and in fact there was no need of more drink, Ketscher shouted, stirring the fiery lake in the soup-tureen and making the last lumps of sugar melt with a hiss and a wail, 'It's time to put it out! time to put it out!'

The flame turns red with the champagne, and races over the surface of the punch with a look of despair and foreboding.

Then comes a voice of despair, 'But I say, old man, you're mad, the wax is melting right into the punch.'

'Well, you try holding the bottle yourself in such heat so that the wax does not melt.'

'Well, something ought to have been wrapped round it first,' the distressed voice continues.

'Cups, cups, have you enough? How many are there of us? Nine, ten, fourteen, yes, yes!'

'Where's one to find fourteen cups?'

'Well any one who hasn't got a cup must take a glass.'

'The glasses will crack.'

'Never, never, you've only to put a spoon in them.'

Candles are brought, the last flicker of flame runs across the middle, makes a pirouette and vanishes.

‘The punch is a success!’

‘It is a great success!’ is said on all sides.

Next day my head aches—I feel sick. That’s evidently from the punch, too mixed! And on the spot I make a sincere resolution never to drink punch for the future; it is a poison.

Pyotr Fyodorovitch comes in.

‘You came home in somebody else’s hat, our hat is a much better one.’

‘The devil take it entirely.’

‘Should I run to Nikolay Mihailovitch’s Kuzma?’

‘Why, do you imagine some one went home without a hat?’

‘It would be just as well anyway.’

At this point I guess that the hat is only a pretext, and that Kuzma has invited Pyotr Fyodorovitch to the field of battle.

‘You go and see Kuzma; only first ask the cook to let me have some sour cabbage.’

‘So, Alexandr Ivanitch, the gentlemen kept their name-days in fine style?’

‘Yes, indeed, there hasn’t been such a supper in our time.’

‘So we shan’t be going to the university to-day?’

My conscience pricks me and I make no answer.

‘Your papa was asking me, “How is it,” says he, “he is not up yet?” Without thinking, I said, “His honour’s head aches; he complained of it from early morning, so I did not even pull up the blinds.” “Well,” said he, “you did right there.”’

‘But do let me go to sleep, for Christ’s sake. You want to go and see Kuzma, so go.’

‘This minute, this minute, sir; first I’ll run for the cabbage.’

A heavy sleep closes my eyes again ; two or three hours later I wake up much better. What are they doing there ? I wonder. Ketscher and Ogaryov stayed the night. It's vexatious that punch has such an effect on the head, for it must be owned it's very nice. It is a mistake to drink punch by the glassful ; henceforth and for ever I will certainly drink no more than a small cupful.

Meantime my father has already finished interviewing the cook and reading the newspapers.

' You have a headache to-day ? '

' Yes, a bad one.'

' Perhaps you have been working too hard ? ' And as he asks the question I can see that he has his doubts already.

' I forgot though, I believe you spent the evening with Nikolasha<sup>1</sup> and Ogaryov.'

' Of course.'

' Did they regale you with anything . . . for the name-day ? Madeira in the soup again ? Ah, I don't like all that. Nikolasha is too fond of wine I know, and where he gets that weakness from I don't understand. Poor Pavel Ivanovitch . . . why, on the twenty-ninth of June, his name-day, he would invite all the relations and have a dinner in the regular way, quiet and proper. But the fashion nowadays, champagne and sardines in oil, it's a disgusting sight. As for that luckless young Ogaryov, I say nothing about him, he is alone and abandoned ! Moscow . . . with plenty of money, his coachman Eremey " goes to fetch wine." The coachman's glad to, he gets ten kopecks at the shop for it.'

' Yes, I lunched with Nikolay Pavlovitch. But I don't think that that's why my head aches. I will go for a little walk ; that always does me good.'

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Nikolay Pavlovitch Golohvastov, the younger of the two sons of a sister of Herzen's father. These two sons are fully described in Vol. II, Chapter 31.—(*Translator's Note.*)

‘By all means; you will dine at home, I hope.’

‘Of course, I am only going out for a little.’

To explain the Madeira in the soup, it must be said that about a year before the famous celebration of the four name-days, Ogaryov and I had gone off for a spree in Easter-week and, to get out of dining at home, I had said that I had been invited to dinner by Ogaryov’s father.

My father disliked my friends as a rule; he used to call them by the wrong surnames, invariably making the same mistake, thus he never failed to call S—— Sakeny and Sazonov, Snaziny. He liked Ogaryov least of all, both because he wore his hair long and because he smoked without asking his leave. On the other hand, he regarded him as a distant cousin and so could not distort the name of a relation. Moreover, his father, Platon Bogdanovitch, belonged both by family and by fortune to the little circle of persons recognised by my father, and he liked my being intimate with the family. He would have liked it better still, if Platon Bogdanovitch had had no son.

And so to refuse the invitation was considered impossible.

Instead of settling ourselves in Platon Bogdanovitch’s respectable dining-room, we set off first to the Prices’ booth (I was delighted later on to meet this family of acrobats in Geneva and in London). There was a little girl there, over whom we raved and whom we had named Mignon.

After gazing at Mignon and resolving to see her again in the evening, we set off to dine at Yar’s. I had a gold piece and Ogaryov about the same. We were at that time complete novices and so, after long consultation, we ordered fish soup with champagne in it, a bottle of Rhine-wine, and some tiny bird, so that when we got up from the dinner, which was frightfully expensive, we



were quite hungry and so went off to look at Mignon again.

When my father said good-night to me, he observed that he thought I smelt of wine.

'That must be because there was Madeira in the soup.'  
'*Au madère*—that must be Platon Bogdanovitch's son-in-law's idea ; *cela sent les casernes de la garde*.'

From that time forth, if my father fancied that I had been drinking, or that my face was red, he would be sure to say to me, 'I suppose you have had Madeira in your soup to-day !'

And so I hastened off to S——'s.

Ogaryov and Ketscher were, of course, on the spot. Ketscher, looking tousled, was displeased with some arrangements that were being made and was criticising them severely. Ogaryov, on the homeopathic system of driving out one nail with another, was drinking up what was left, not merely after the supper but after the foraging of Pyotr Fyodorovitch, who was already singing, whistling, and playing a tattoo in S——'s kitchen.

Recalling the days of our youth, of all our circle, I do not remember a single incident which would weigh on the conscience, which one would be ashamed to think of. And that applies to all our friends without exception.

There were, of course, Platonic dreamers and disillusioned youths of seventeen among us. Vadim even wrote a drama in which he tried to depict 'the terrible ordeal of his spent heart.' The drama began like this : 'A garden—house in distance—windows lighted—storm raging—no one in sight—garden gate not fastened, it flaps to and fro and creaks.'

'Are there any characters in the drama besides the gate in the garden ?' I asked Vadim.

And Vadim, rather nettled, said, 'You're always playing the fool ! It's not a jest, it's the record of my

heart; if you go on like that I won't read it'—and proceeded to read it.

There were follies, too, that were not at all Platonic; even some that ended not in writing plays but in the chemist's shop. But there were no vulgar intrigues ruining a woman or humiliating a man, there were no kept mistresses (indeed the vulgar word for them did not exist among us). Tranquil, secure, prosaic, petty bourgeois vice, vice by contract, passed our circle by.

'Then you do admit the worse form of vice, prostitution?' I shall be asked.

Not I, but you do! that is, not you individually, but all of you. It is so firmly established in the social structure that it asks for no sanction from me.

Social enthusiasm, general theories, were our salvation; and not they alone but also a high development of scientific and artistic interest. Like fumigating paper, they burnt out the grease spots. I have preserved some of Ogaryov's letters of that period, and the background of our lives can be easily judged from them. On June 7, 1833, Ogaryov, for instance, wrote to me:

'I believe we know each other, I believe we can be open. You will not show my letters to any one else. And so tell me—for some time past I have been so absolutely brimming over, I may say, suffocated with sensations and thoughts, that I fancy, it's more than fancy, the idea sticks in my head, that it is my vocation to be a poet, a creative artist or a musician, *alles eins*, but I feel that I must live in that thought, for I have a feeling in myself that I am a poet;—granted that I have written rubbish so far, yet the fire in my soul, the exuberance of my feelings, gives me the hope that I shall write decently (excuse the vulgar expression). Tell me, friend, am I to believe in my vocation? You know me, maybe, better than I know myself, and will not make a mistake.'

—June 7, 1833.

‘ You write : but you are a poet, a real poet ! Friend, can you conceive all that those words do for me ? And so all that I feel, to which I strive, in which I live is not an illusion ! It is not an illusion ! Are you telling the truth ? It is not the delirium of fever—that I feel. You know me better than any one, don’t you ? I certainly feel that you do. No, this exalted life is not the delirium of fever, not the illusion of imagination, it is too exalted for deception, it is real, I live in it, I cannot imagine myself with any other life. Why don’t I understand music, what a symphony would rise out of my soul now ! One can catch the stately *adagio*, but I have no power to express myself ; I want to say more than has been said, *presto, presto*, I want a tempestuous, irrepressible *presto*. *Adagio* and *presto*, the two extremes. Away with these compromises, *andante*, *allegro*, *moderato*, faltering or feeble-minded, they can neither speak strongly nor feel strongly.’—TCHERTKOV, *Aug. 18, 1833*.

We have grown out of the habit of this enthusiastic babble of youth and it is strange to us, but in these lines, written by a youth under twenty, it can clearly be seen that he is insured against vulgar vice and vulgar virtue, and that even if he is not saved from the mire, he will come out of it unsullied.

It is not lack of self-confidence, it is the hesitation of faith, it is the passionate desire for confirmation, for the superfluous word of love, so precious to us. Yes, it is the uneasiness of creative conception, it is the anxious searchings of a soul in travail.

‘ I cannot yet,’ he writes in the same letter, ‘ catch the notes which are resounding in my soul, physical incapacity limits the imagination. But, hang it all ! I am a poet, poetry whispers the truth to me where I could not have grasped it with cold reason.’

So ends the first part of our youth ; the second begins

in prison. But before we go on to it, I must say something of the tendencies, of the ideas, with which it found us.

The period that followed the suppression of the Polish insurrection educated us rapidly. We were not merely troubled that Nicholas had grown to his full stature and was firmly established in severity; we began with inward horror to discover that in Europe, too, and especially in France, to which we looked for our political watchword and battle-cry, things were not going well; we began to look upon our theories with suspicion.

The childish liberalism of 1826, which gradually passed into the French political theory expounded by the Lafayettes and Benjamin Constant and sung by Béranger, lost its magic power over us after the ruin of Poland.

Then one section of the young people, and among them Vadim, threw themselves into a close and earnest study of Russian history.

Another set took to the study of German philosophy.

Ogaryov and I belonged to neither of these sets. We had grown too closely attached to certain ideas to part with them readily.

Our faith in revolution of the festive Beranger stamp was shaken, but we looked for something which we could find neither in the *Chronicle* of Nestor<sup>1</sup> nor in the transcendental idealism of Schelling.

In the midst of this ferment, in the midst of surmises, of confused efforts to understand the doubts which frightened us, the pamphlets of Saint Simon and his followers, their tracts and their trial came into our hands. They impressed us.

Critics, superficial and not superficial, have laughed

<sup>1</sup> This is the earliest record of Russian history. It begins with the Deluge and continues in leisurely fashion up to the year 1110. Nestor, of whom nothing is really known, is assumed to have been a monk of the twelfth century.—(Translator's Note.)

enough at Father Enfantin <sup>1</sup> and his apostles ; the time has now come for some recognition of these forerunners of socialism.

These enthusiastic youths with their strange waistcoats and their budding beards made a magnificent and poetic appearance in the midst of the petty-bourgeois world. They heralded a new faith, they had something to say, they had something in the name of which to judge the old order of things, fain to judge them by the Code Napoleon and the religion of Orleans.

On the one hand came the emancipation of woman, the call to her to join in common labour, the giving of her destiny into her own hands, alliance with her as with an equal.

On the other hand the justification, the *redemption* of the flesh, *Réhabilitation de la chair* !

Grand words, involving a whole world of new relations between human beings ; a world of health, a world of spirit, a world of beauty, the world of natural morality, and therefore of moral purity. Many have scoffed at the emancipation of women and at the recognition of the rights of the flesh, giving to those words a filthy and vulgar meaning ; our monastically depraved imagination fears the flesh, fears woman. Simple-hearted people grasped that the purifying sanctification of the flesh is the death knell of Christianity ; the religion of life had come to replace the religion of death, the religion of beauty to replace the religion of castigation and mortification by prayer and fasting. The crucified body had risen again in its turn and was no longer ashamed ; man attained a harmonious unity and divined that he was a whole being and not made up like a pendulum of two different metals restraining each other, that the enemy bound up with him had disappeared.

<sup>1</sup> Enfantin, a French engineer, was one of the founders of Saint-Simonism.—(*Translator's Note.*)

What courage was needed in France to proclaim in the hearing of all those words of deliverance from the spiritual ideas which are so strong in the minds of the French and so completely absent from their conduct !

The old world, ridiculed by Voltaire, undermined by the Revolution, but fortified, patched up and made secure by the petty-bourgeois for their own personal convenience, had never experienced this before. It tried to judge the heretics on the basis of its secret conspiracy of hypocrisy, but these young men unmasked it. They were accused of being apostates from Christianity, and they pointed above their judge's head to the holy picture that had been covered with a curtain after the Revolution of 1830. They were charged with justifying sensuality, and they asked their judge, was his life chaste ?

The new world was pushing at the door, and our hearts opened wide to meet it. Saint-Simonism lay at the foundation of our convictions and remained so in its essentials unalterably.

Impressionable, genuinely youthful, we were easily caught up in its mighty current and passed early over that boundary at which whole crowds of people remain standing with their hands folded, go back or seek from side to side a ford—to cross the ocean !

But not all ventured with us. Socialism and Realism remain to this day the touchstones flung on the paths of revolution and science. Groups of travellers, tossed up against these rocks by the current of events, or by process of reasoning, immediately divide and make two everlasting parties which, in various disguises, cut across the whole of history, across all upheavals, across innumerable political parties and even circles of no more than a dozen youths. One stands for logic, the other for history ; one for dialectics, the other for embryology. One is more correct, the other more practical.

There can be no talk of choice ; it is harder to bridle

thought than any passion, it leads one on unconsciously ; any one who can chain it by feeling, by dreams, by dread of consequences, will chain it, but not all can. If thought gets the upper hand in any one, he does not inquire about its practicability, or whether it will make things easier or harder ; he seeks the truth, and inflexibly, impartially lays down his principles, as the Saint-Simonists did at one time, as Proudhon does to this day.

Our circle drew in closer. Even then, in 1833, the Liberals looked at us askance, as having strayed from the true path. Just before we went to prison, Saint-Simonism became a barrier between N. A. Polevoy and me. Polevoy was a man of extraordinarily ingenious and active mind, which readily absorbed every kind of nutriment ; he was born to be a journalist, a chronicler of successes, of discoveries, of political and learned controversies. I made his acquaintance at the end of my time at the university—and was sometimes in his house and at his brother Ksenofont's. This was the time when his reputation was at its highest, the period just before the prohibition of the *Telegraph*.

This man who lived in the latest discovery, in the question of the hour, in the last novelty, in theories and in events, and who changed like a chameleon, could not, for all the liveliness of his mind, understand Saint-Simonism. For us Saint-Simonism was a revelation, for him it was insanity, a silly Utopia, hindering social development. To all my rhetoric, my expositions and arguments, Polevoy was deaf ; he lost his temper and grew vindictive. Opposition from a student was particularly annoying to him, for he greatly prized his influence on the young, and saw in this dispute that it was slipping away from him.

On one occasion, offended by the absurdity of his objections, I observed that he was just as old-fashioned a Conservative as those against whom he had been



fighting all his life. Polevoy was deeply offended by my words and, shaking his head, said to me : ' The time will come when you will be rewarded for a whole lifetime of toil and effort by some young man's saying with a smile, " Be off, you are behind the times." ' I felt sorry for him and ashamed of having hurt his feelings, but at the same time I felt that his sentence could be heard in his melancholy words. They were not those of a mighty champion, but of an exhausted and aged gladiator. I realised then that he would not advance, and was incapable of standing still at the same point with a mind so active and a basis so insecure.

You know what happened to him afterwards : he set to work upon his *Parasha, the Siberian*.<sup>1</sup>

What luck a timely death is for a man who can at the right moment neither leave the stage nor move forward ! I have thought that looking at Polevoy, looking at Pius ix., and at many others !

<sup>1</sup> Familiar to all English school-girls of the last generation in the French as *La Jeune Sibérienne* by Xavier de Maistre. I cannot discover whether the Russian version is the original and the French the translation or vice versa.—(Translator's Note.)

## Appendix

### A. POLEZHAEV

TO complete the gloomy record of that period, I ought to add a few details about A. Polezhaev.

As a student, Polezhaev was renowned for his excellent verses. Amongst other things he wrote a humorous parody of '*Onyegin*,' called '*Sashka*,' in which, regardless of proprieties, he attacked many things in a jesting tone, in very charming verses.

In the autumn of 1826, Nicholas, after hanging Pestel, Muravyov, and their friends, celebrated his coronation in Moscow. For other sovereigns these ceremonies are occasions for amnesties and pardons: Nicholas, after celebrating his apotheosis, proceeded again to 'strike down the foes of the father-land,' like Robespierre after his '*Fête-Dieu*.'

The secret police brought him Polezhaev's poem.

And so at three o'clock one night, the rector woke Polezhaev, told him to put on his uniform and go to the office. There the director was awaiting him. After looking to see that all the necessary buttons were on his uniform and no unnecessary ones, he invited Polezhaev without any explanation to get into his carriage and drove off with him.

He conducted him to the Minister of Public Instruction. The latter put Polezhaev into his carriage and he too drove him off—but this time straight to the Tsar.

Prince Lieven left Polezhaev in the drawing-room—where several courtiers and higher officials were already waiting although it was only six o'clock in the morning—and went into the inner apartments. The courtiers imagined that the young man had distinguished himself in some way and at once entered into conversation with him. A senator suggested that he might give lessons to his son.

Polezhaev was summoned to the study. The Tsar

was standing leaning on the bureau and talking to Lieven. He flung a searching and malignant glance at the new-comer ; there was a manuscript in his hand.

‘ Did you write these verses ? ’ he inquired.

‘ Yes,’ answered Polezhaev.

‘ Here, prince,’ the Tsar continued, ‘ I will give you a specimen of university education, I will show you what young men learn there. Read the manuscript aloud,’ he added, addressing Polezhaev.

The agitation of the latter was so great that he could not read. Nicholas’s eyes were fixed immovably upon him. I know them and know nothing so terrible, so hopeless, as those colourless, cold, pewtery eyes.

‘ I cannot,’ said Polezhaev.

‘ Read ! ’ shouted the imperial drum-major.

That shout restored Polezhaev’s faculties ; he opened the manuscript. Never, he told us, had he seen ‘ *Sashka* ’ so carefully copied and on such splendid paper.

At first it was hard for him to read ; then as he got more and more into the spirit of the thing, he read the poem in a loud and lively voice. At particularly startling passages, the Tsar made a sign with his hand to the Minister and the latter covered his eyes with horror.

‘ What do you say to that ? ’ Nicholas inquired at the end of the reading. ‘ I will put a stop to this corruption ; these are the *last traces, the last remnants* ; I will root them out. What is his record ? ’

The minister, of course, knew nothing of his record, but some human feeling must have stirred in him, for he said : ‘ He has an excellent record, your Majesty.’

‘ That record has saved you, but you must be punished, as an example to others. Would you like to go into the army ? ’

Polezhaev was silent.

‘ I give you a chance of clearing your name in the army. Well ? ’

‘I must obey,’ answered Polezhaev.

The Tsar went up to him, laid his hand on his shoulder and, saying to him, ‘Your fate is in your own hands, if I forget you you can *write* to me,’ *kissed him on the forehead*.

I made Polezhaev repeat the story of the kiss a dozen times, it seemed to me so incredible. He swore that it was true.

From the Tsar, he was led off to Dibitch, who lived on the spot in the palace. Dibitch was asleep; he was awakened, came out yawning, and, after reading the paper handed to him, asked the aide-de-camp: ‘Is this he?’—‘Yes, your Excellency.’

‘Well! it’s a capital thing; you will serve in the army. I have always been in the army, and you see what I’ve risen to, and maybe you’ll be made a field-marshal.’ This stupid, inappropriate, German joke was Dibitch’s equivalent to a kiss. Polezhaev was led off to the camp and handed over to the soldiers.

Three years passed. Polezhaev remembered the Tsar’s words and wrote him a letter. No answer came. A few months later he wrote a second; again there was no answer. Convinced that his letters did not reach the Tsar, he ran away, and ran away in order to present a petition in person. He behaved carelessly, saw his old friends in Moscow and was entertained by them; of course, that could not be kept secret. In Tver he was seized and sent back to his regiment, as a runaway soldier, on foot and in chains. The court-martial condemned him to run the gauntlet; the sentence was despatched to the Tsar for ratification.

Polezhaev wanted to kill himself before the punishment. After searching in vain in his prison for a sharp instrument, he confided in an old soldier who liked him. The soldier understood him and respected his wishes. When the old man learned that the answer had come, he brought him a bayonet and, as he gave him it, said through his tears: ‘I have sharpened it myself.’

The Tsar did not confirm Polezhaev's sentence.

Then it was that he wrote the fine poem beginning :

'I perished lonely,  
No help was nigh.  
My evil genius  
Passed mocking by.'<sup>1</sup>

Polezhaev was sent to the Caucasus. There for distinguished service he was promoted to be a non-commissioned officer. Years and years passed ; his hopeless, dreary position broke him down ; become a police poet and sing the glories of Nicholas he could not, and that was the only way of escape from the army.

There was, however, another means of escape, and he preferred it ; he drank to win forgetfulness. There is a terrible poem of his, 'To Vodka.'

He succeeded in getting transferred to a regiment of the Carabineers stationed in Moscow. This was a considerable alleviation of his lot, but malignant consumption had already laid its grip upon him.

It was at this period that I made his acquaintance, about 1833. He struggled on another four years and died in the military hospital.

When one of his friends went to ask for the body for burial, no one knew where it was ; the military hospital did a trade in corpses ; they sold them to the university and to the Medical Academy, made them into skeletons, and so on. At last he found poor Polezhaev's body in a cellar ; he was lying under a heap of others and the rats had gnawed off one foot.

After his death, his poems were published, and his portrait in a soldier's uniform was to have been included in the edition. The censor thought this unseemly, and the poor martyr was portrayed with the epaulettes of an officer—he had been promoted in the hospital.

<sup>1</sup> Translated by Juliet Soskice.

## PART II

# PRISON & EXILE

(1834-1838)

### Chapter 8

A PREDICTION—OGARYOV'S ARREST—A FIRE—A MOSCOW  
LIBERAL—M. F. ORLOV—THE GRAVEYARD

ONE day in the spring of 1834, I arrived at Vadim's in the morning and found neither him nor any of his brothers and sisters at home. I went upstairs to his little room and sat down to write.

The door softly opened and Vadim's mother came in ; her footsteps were barely audible ; looking weary and ill she went up to an armchair and said to me, as she sat down : ' Go on writing, go on writing, I came to see whether Vadya had come in ; the children have gone for a walk and downstairs it is so empty, I felt sad and frightened. I'll stay here a little, I won't hinder you, go on with your work.'

Her face was pensive and I could see in it even more clearly than usual the imprint of what she had suffered in the past and of that suspicious apprehensiveness in regard to the future, that distrust of life, which is always left after great and prolonged misfortunes.

We began to talk. She told me something about Siberia : ' I have had very many troubles to bear and I have more to see yet,' she added, shaking her head, ' my heart bodes nothing good.'

I thought how sometimes, after hearing our bold talk and demagogic conversation, she would turn pale, sigh softly, go out of the room and for a long time not utter a word.

' You and your friends,' she went on, ' you are going

the sure road to ruin. You will ruin Vadya, yourself, and all of them; I love you, too, you know, like a son.' A tear ran down her wasted cheek.

I did not speak. She took my hand and, trying to smile, added: 'Don't be angry, my nerves are overwrought; I understand it all, you go your path, there is no other for you, and, if there were, you would none of you be the same. I know that, but I cannot get over my alarm; I have been through so many troubles that I have no strength to face fresh ones. Mind you don't say a word to Vadya about this, he would be distressed, he would talk to me. . . . Here he is,' she added, hurriedly wiping away her tears and once more asking me with her eyes to say nothing.

Poor mother! Noble, great-hearted woman! It is as fine as Corneille's 'qu'il mourût!'

Her prediction was soon fulfilled; happily this time the storm passed over the heads of her family, but it brought the poor woman much sorrow and alarm.

'Taken? What do you mean?' I asked, jumping out of bed and feeling my head to make sure that I was awake.

'The police-master came in the night with the district policeman and Cossacks, about two hours after you left, seized all the papers and took Nikolay Platonovitch.' It was Ogaryov's valet speaking. I could not imagine what pretext the police had invented; of late everything had been quiet. Ogaryov had only arrived a day or two before . . . and why had they taken him and not me?

It was impossible to remain doing nothing; I dressed and went out of the house with no definite aim. It was the first trouble that had befallen me. I felt sick, I was tortured by my impotence.

As I wandered about the streets, I thought, at last, of a friend V—— whose social position made it possible for him to find out what was the matter and, perhaps, to help. He lived a terrible distance away in a summer



villa beyond the Vorontsov Field; I got into the first cab I came across and galloped off to him. It was before seven in the morning.

I had made the acquaintance of V—— about a year and a half before; he was in his way a lion in Moscow. He had been educated in Paris, was wealthy, intelligent, cultured, witty, free-thinking, had been clapped into the Peter-Paul fortress over the affair of the Fourteenth of December and was among those afterwards acquitted; he had had no experience of exile, but the glory of the affair clung to him. He was in the government service and had great influence with the governor-general, Prince Golitsyn, who was fond of men of a free way of thinking, particularly if they expressed their views fluently in French. The prince was not strong in Russian.

V—— was ten years older than we, and surprised us by his practical remarks, his knowledge of political affairs, his French eloquence and the ardour of his Liberalism. He knew so much and in such detail, talked so charmingly and so easily; his opinions were so clearly defined; he had answers, good advice, explanations for everything. He had read everything, all the new novels, treatises, magazines, and poetry, was moreover a devoted student of zoology, wrote out schemes of reform for Prince Golitsyn and drew out plans for children's books. His Liberalism was of the purest, trebly-distilled essence, of the left wing between that of Mauguin and of General Lamarque.

His study was hung with portraits of all the revolutionary celebrities from Hampden and Bailly<sup>1</sup> to Fieschi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Bailly (1736-1793), one of the early leaders of the French revolution, and an astronomer and literary man of some distinction, was Mayor of Paris after the taking of the Bastille, and executed in 1793.

<sup>2</sup> Fieschi, the celebrated conspirator, executed in 1836 for the attempt with an 'infernal machine' on the life of Louis-Philippe.—*(Translator's Notes.)*

and Armand Carrel. A whole library of prohibited books was to be found under this revolutionary shrine.

A skeleton, a few stuffed birds, some dried amphibians, and insides of animals preserved in spirit, gave a serious tone of study and reflection to the over-impetuous character of the room.

We used to look with envy at his experience and knowledge of men; his refined ironical manner of arguing had a great influence on us. We looked upon him as a capable revolutionary, as a statesman *in spe*.

I did not find V—— at home, he had gone to town overnight for an interview with Prince Golitsyn. His valet told me he would certainly be home within an hour and a half. I waited.

V——'s summer villa was a splendid one. The study in which I sat waiting was a lofty, spacious room, and an immense door led to the verandah and into the garden. It was a hot day, the fragrance of trees and flowers came in from the garden, children were playing in front of the house with ringing laughter. Wealth, abundance, space, sunshine and shadow, flowers and greenery . . . while in prison it is cramped, stifling, dark. I do not know how long I had been sitting there absorbed in bitter thoughts, when suddenly the valet called me from the verandah with a peculiar animation.

'What is it?' I inquired.

'Oh, come here and look.'

I went out to the verandah, not to wound him by refusal, and stood petrified. A whole semi-circle of houses were blazing away, as though they had been set fire to at the same moment. The fire was spreading with incredible rapidity.

I remained on the verandah; the valet gazed with a sort of nervous pleasure at the fire, saying: 'It's going finely—look, that house on the right is beginning to burn, it's certainly beginning to burn.'

A fire has something revolutionary about it; it laughs at property and levels fortunes. The valet understood that instinctively.

Half an hour later half the horizon was covered with smoke, red behind and greyish-black above. That day Lefortovo was burned down. It was the first of a series of cases of incendiarism, which went on for five months, and we shall speak of them again.

At last V—— arrived. He was at his best, charming and cordial; he told me about the fire by which he had driven and about the general belief that it was a case of arson, and added, half in jest: 'It's Pugatchovism. You'll see, we shan't escape, they will put us on a stake.'

'Before they put us on a stake,' I answered, 'I am afraid they will put us on a chain. Do you know that last night the police seized Ogaryov?'

'The police—what are you saying?'

'That's what I have come to you about. Something must be done; go to Prince Golitsyn, find out what's the matter and ask permission for me to see him.'

Receiving no answer, I glanced at V——, but where he had been, it seemed as though an elder brother were sitting with a livid face and sunken features; he was moaning and moving uneasily.

'What's the matter?'

'There, I told you; I always said what it would lead to. . . . Yes, yes, we might have expected it. Oh dear, oh dear! . . . I am not to blame in thought nor in act, but very likely they will put me in prison too, and that is no joking matter; I know what the fortress is like.'

'Will you go to the prince?'

'Upon my word, whatever for? I advise you as a friend, don't even speak of Ogaryov; keep as quiet as you can, or it will be bad for you. You don't know how dangerous these things are; my sincere advice is, keep

out of it, do your utmost and you won't help Ogaryov, but you will ruin yourself. That's what autocracy means—no rights, no defence; are the lawyers and judges any use?'

On this occasion I was not disposed to listen to his bold opinions and startling criticisms. I took my hat and went away.

At home I found everything in agitation. Already my father was angry with me on account of Ogaryov's arrest. Already the Senator was on the spot, rummaging among my books, taking away what he thought dangerous, and in a very bad humour.

On the table I found a note from M. F. Orlov inviting me to dinner. Could he not do something for us? I was beginning to be discouraged by experience: still there was no harm in trying.

Mihail Fyodorovitch Orlov was one of the founders of the celebrated League of Welfare,<sup>1</sup> and that he had not reached Siberia was not his own fault, but was due to his brother, who enjoyed the special favour of Nicholas and had been the first to gallop with his Horse Guards to the defence of the Winter Palace on December the Fourteenth. Orlov was sent to his estate in the country, and a few years later was allowed to live in Moscow. During his solitary life in the country he studied political economy and chemistry. The first time I met him he talked of his new system of nomenclature in chemistry. All energetic people who begin studying a subject late

<sup>1</sup> The League of Public Welfare was formed in the reign of Alexander I. to support philanthropic undertakings and education, to improve the administration of justice, and to promote the economical welfare of the country. The best men in Russia belonged to it. At first approved by Alexander, it was afterwards repressed, and it split into the 'Union of the North,' which aimed at establishing constitutional government, and the 'Union of the South' led by Pestel, which aimed at republicanism. The two Unions combined in the attempt of December the Fourteenth.—(*Translator's Note.*)

in life show an inclination to move the furniture about and rearrange it to suit themselves. His nomenclature was more complicated than the received French system. I wanted to attract his attention, and by way of gaining his favour began proving to him that his system was good, but the old one was better.

Orlov contested the point and then agreed.

My effort to please succeeded: from that time we were on intimate terms. He saw in me a rising possibility; I saw in him a veteran of our views, a friend of our heroes, a noble figure in our lives.

Poor Orlov was like a lion in a cage. Everywhere he knocked himself against the bars, he had neither space to move nor work to do and was consumed by a thirst for activity.

After the fall of France, I more than once met people of the same sort, people who were disintegrated by the craving for public activity and incapable of occupying themselves within the four walls of their study or in home life. They do not know how to be alone; in solitude they are attacked with ennui, they become whimsical, quarrel with their last friends, see intrigues against them on all hands, and themselves intrigue to find out all these non-existent plots.

A stage and spectators are as necessary to them as the air they breathe; in the public view they really are heroes and will endure the unendurable. They must have noise, clamour, applause, they want to make speeches, to hear their enemies' replies, they crave the stimulus of struggle, the fever of danger, and without these tonics they are miserable, they pine, let themselves go and grow heavy, break out and make mistakes. Such is Ledru-Rollin, who, by the way, has a look of Orlov in the face, particularly since he has grown moustaches.

Orlov was very handsome; his tall figure, fine carriage, handsome, manly features and completely bare skull,

altogether gave an indescribable attractiveness to his appearance. His bust would make a good contrast to the bust of A. P. Yermolov, whose frowning, quadrangular brow, thick thatch of grey hair, and eyes piercing the distance gave him that beauty of the warrior chieftain grown old in battles, which won Maria Kotcheby's heart in Mazeppa.

Orlov was so bored that he did not know what to begin upon. He tried founding a glass factory, in which mediæval stained glass was made, costing him more than he sold it for; and began writing a book 'on credit'—no, that was not the way his heart yearned to go, and yet it was the only way open to him. The lion was condemned to wander idly between Arbat and Basmanny Street, not even daring to let his tongue move freely.

It was terribly pitiful to see Orlov trying to become a learned man, a theorist. His intelligence was clear and brilliant, but not at all speculative, and he got entangled at once among newly invented systems in long-familiar subjects—like his chemical nomenclature for instance. He was a complete failure in everything abstract, but with intense exasperation applied himself to metaphysics.

Careless and incontinent of speech, he was continually making mistakes; carried away by his first impression, which was always chivalrously lofty, he would suddenly remember his position and turn back half way. He was an even greater failure in these diplomatic counter-marches than in metaphysics and nomenclature; and, having got into one difficulty, he would get into two or three more in trying to right himself. He was blamed for this; people are so superficial and inattentive that they look more to words than to acts, and attach more weight to separate mistakes than to the drift of the whole character. What is the use of blaming a man from the point of view of Roman virtue, one must blame the melancholy surroundings in which any noble feeling

must be communicated by contraband, underground, and behind locked doors ; and, if one says a word aloud, one is wondering all day how soon the police will come. . . .

There was a large party at the dinner. I happened to sit beside General Raevsky, the brother of Orlov's wife. He too had been under a ban since the Fourteenth of December ; the son of the celebrated N. N. Raevsky, he had as a boy of fourteen been with his brother at Borodino by his father's side ; later on, he died of wounds in the Caucasus. I told him about Ogaryov, and asked him whether Orlov could do anything and whether he would care to do it.

A cloud came over Raevsky's face, but it was not the look of tearful cowardice which I had seen in the morning, but a mixture of bitter memories and repulsion.

'There is no question of caring or not caring,' he answered, 'only I doubt whether Orlov can do much ; after dinner go to the study and I will bring him to you. So then,' he added after a pause, 'your turn has come ; all are dragged down to that black pit.'

After questioning me, Orlov wrote a letter to Prince Golitsyn asking for an interview.

'The prince,' he told me, 'is a very decent man ; if he won't do anything, he will at least tell us the truth.'

Next day I went for an answer. Prince Golitsyn said that Ogaryov had been arrested by order of the Tsar, that a committee of inquiry had been appointed, and that the material evidence was some supper on the 24th June, at which seditious songs had been sung. I could make nothing of it. That day was my father's name-day ; I had spent the whole day at home and Ogaryov had been with us.

It was with a heavy heart that I left Orlov ; he, too, was troubled ; when I gave him my hand he stood up, embraced me, pressed me warmly to his broad chest and kissed me.



It was as though he felt that we were parting for long years.

I only saw him once afterwards, six years later. He was smouldering out. The look of illness on his face, the melancholy and a sort of new angularity in it struck me; he was gloomy, was conscious that he was breaking up, knew things were all going wrong—and saw no way of salvation. Two months later, he died, the blood curdled in his veins.

. . . There is a wonderful monument in Lucerne; carved by Thorwaldsen in natural rock. A dying lion is lying in a hollow; he is wounded to death, the blood is streaming from a wound, in which the fragment of an arrow is sticking; he has laid his gallant head upon his paw, he is moaning, there is a look in his eyes of unbearable pain; around there is a wilderness, with a pond below, all shut in by mountains, trees, and greenery; people pass by without seeing that here a royal beast is dying.

Once after sitting some time on the seat facing the stone agony, I was suddenly reminded of my last visit to Orlov.

Driving home from Orlov, I passed the house of the chief police-master, and the idea occurred to me to ask him openly for permission to see Ogaryov.

I had never in my life been in the house of a police official. I was kept waiting a long time; at last the head police-master came out. My request surprised him.

‘What grounds have you for asking this permission?’

‘Ogaryov is my cousin.’

‘Your cousin?’ he asked, looking straight into my face. I did not answer, but I, too, looked straight into his Excellency’s face.

‘I cannot give you permission,’ he said; ‘your cousin is *au secret*. I am very sorry!’

Uncertainty and inactivity were killing me. I had

hardly a friend in town, I could find out absolutely nothing. It seemed as though the police had forgotten or overlooked me. It was very, very dreary. But just when the whole sky was overcast with grey storm-clouds and the long night of exile and prison was approaching, a ray of light came to me.

A few words of deep sympathy uttered by a girl of seventeen whom I had looked upon as a child raised me up again.

For the first time in my story a woman's figure appears . . . and precisely one woman's figure appears throughout all my life.

The passing fancies of youth and spring that had stirred my soul paled and vanished before it, like pictures in the mist; and no fresh ones came.

We met in a graveyard. She stood leaning against a tombstone and spoke of Ogaryov, and my grief was comforted.

'Till to-morrow,' she said and gave me her hand, smiling through her tears.

'Till to-morrow,' I answered . . . and stood a long time looking after her retreating figure.

That was on the nineteenth of July 1834.

## Chapter 9

ARREST—AN IMPARTIAL WITNESS—THE OFFICE OF THE  
PRETCHISTENSKY POLICE STATION—A PATRIARCHAL JUDGE

‘TILL to-morrow,’ I repeated, as I fell asleep.  
... I felt extraordinarily light-hearted and happy.

Between one and two in the night, my father’s valet woke me; he was not dressed and was panic-stricken.

‘An officer is asking for you.’

‘What officer?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘Well, I do,’ I told him and flung on my dressing-gown.

In the doorway of the drawing-room, a figure was standing wrapped in a military greatcoat; by the window I saw a white plume, behind there were other persons,—I distinguished the cap of a Cossack.

It was the police-master, Miller.

He told me that by an order of the military governor-general, which he held in his hand, he must look through my papers. Candles were brought. The police-master took my keys; the district police superintendent and his lieutenant began rummaging among my books and my linen. The police-master busied himself among my papers; everything seemed to him suspicious, he laid them all on one side and all at once turned to me and said: ‘I must ask you to dress meanwhile; you’ll come along with me.’

‘Where?’ I asked.

‘To the Pretchistensky police station,’ answered the police-master in a soothing voice.

‘And then?’

‘There is nothing more in the governor-general’s instructions.’

I began to dress.

Meanwhile the panic-stricken servants had awakened my mother. She rushed out of her bedroom and was coming to my room, but was stopped by a Cossack at the drawing-room door. She uttered a shriek, I shuddered and ran to her. The police-master left the papers and came with me to the drawing-room. He apologised to my mother, let her pass, swore at the Cossack, who was not to blame, and went back to the papers.

Then my father came up. He was pale but tried to maintain his studied indifference. The scene was becoming painful. My mother sat in the corner, weeping. My old father spoke of irrelevant matters with the police-master, but his voice shook. I was afraid that I could not stand this for long and did not want to afford the local police superintendent the satisfaction of seeing me in tears.

I pulled the police-master by the sleeve, 'Let us go!'

'Let us go,' he said with relief. My father went out of the room and returned a minute later. He brought a little ikon and put it round my neck, saying that his father had given it to him with his blessing on his death-bed. I was touched: this *religious* gift showed me the degree of terror and distress in the old man's heart. I knelt down while he was putting it on; he helped me up, embraced me and blessed me.

The ikon was a picture in enamel of the head of John the Baptist on a charger. What this was—example, advice, or prophecy?—I don't know, but the significance of the ikon struck me.

My mother was almost unconscious.

All the servants accompanied me down the staircase weeping and rushing to kiss me or my hand. I felt as though I were present at my own funeral. The police-master scowled and hurried on.

When we went out at the gate he collected his

company; he had with him four Cossacks, two police superintendents and two ordinary policemen.

‘Allow me to go home,’ a man with a beard who was sitting in front of the gate asked the police-master.

‘You can go,’ said Miller.

‘What man is that?’ I asked, getting into the droshky.

‘The impartial witness; you know that without an impartial witness the police cannot enter a house.’

‘Then why did you leave him at the gate?’

‘It’s a mere form! It’s simply keeping the man out of bed for nothing,’ observed Miller.

We drove accompanied by two Cossacks on horseback.

There was no special room for me in the police station. The police-master directed that I should be put in the office until the morning. He himself took me there; he flung himself in an easy chair and, yawning wearily, muttered: ‘It’s a damnable service. I’ve been at the races since three o’clock in the afternoon, and here I’ll be busy with you till morning. I bet it’s past three already and to-morrow I must go with the report at nine.’

‘Good-bye,’ he added a minute later, and went out. A non-commissioned officer locked me in, observing that if I wanted anything I could knock at the door.

I opened the window. The day was already beginning and the wind of morning was rising; I asked the non-commissioned officer for water and drank off a whole jugful. There was no thinking of sleep. Besides there was nowhere to lie down; apart from the dirty leather chair and one easy chair, there was nothing in the office but a big table heaped up with papers and in the corner a little table still more heaped up with papers. The dim night-light hardly lighted the room, but made a flickering patch of light on the ceiling that grew paler and paler with the dawn.

I sat down in the place of the police superintendent

and took up the first paper that was lying on the table, a document relating to the funeral of a serf of Prince Gagarin's and a medical certificate that he had died according to all the rules of medical science. I picked up another—it was a set of police regulations. I ran through it and found a paragraph which stated that 'Every arrested man has the right within three days after his arrest to know the ground of his arrest or to be released.' I noted this paragraph for my own benefit.

An hour later I saw through the window our butler bringing me a pillow, bedclothes, and a greatcoat. He asked something of the non-commissioned officer, probably permission to come in to me; he was a grey-headed old man, to two or three of whose children I had stood godfather as a small boy. The non-commissioned officer gave him a rough and abrupt refusal; one of our coachmen was standing near. I shouted to them from the window. The non-commissioned officer fussed about and told them to be off. The old man bowed to me and shed tears; the coachman, as he lashed the horses, took off his hat and wiped his eyes, the droshky rattled away and my tears fell in streams, my heart was brimming over; they were the first and last tears I shed while I was in prison.

Towards morning the office began to fill up, the clerk arrived still drunk from the evening before, a consumptive-looking individual with red hair, a look of brutal vice on his pimpled face. He wore a very dirty, badly-cut and shiny coat of a brick colour. After him another extremely free-and-easy individual in the greatcoat of a non-commissioned officer arrived. He at once addressed me with the question:

'Were you taken at the theatre or what?'

'I was arrested at home.'

'Did Fyodor Ivanovitch himself arrest you?'

'Who's Fyodor Ivanovitch?'

‘Colonel Miller.’

‘Yes.’

‘I understand.’ He winked to the red-haired man who showed no interest whatever. The free-and-easy individual did not continue the conversation—he saw that I had been taken neither for disorderly conduct nor drunkenness, so lost all interest in me, or perhaps was afraid to enter into conversation with a dangerous prisoner.

Not long afterwards various sleepy-looking police officials made their appearance and then came people with grievances and legal complaints.

The keeper of a brothel brought a complaint against the owner of a beer-shop, that he had publicly insulted her in his shop in such language, as, being a woman, she could not bring herself to utter before the police. The shopkeeper swore that he had not used such language. The woman swore that he had uttered the words more than once and very loudly, and added that he had raised his hand against her and that, if she had not ducked, he would have cut her face open. The shopkeeper declared that, in the first place, she had not paid what she owed him, and, in the second, had insulted him in his own shop and, what’s more, threatened that he should be thrashed within an inch of his life by her followers.

The brothel-keeper, a tall, untidy woman with puffy eyes, screamed in a loud shrill voice and was extremely talkative. The man made more use of mimicry and gesture than of words.

The police Solomon, instead of judging between them, scolded them both vigorously.

‘The dogs are too well fed, that’s why they run mad,’ he said; ‘the beasts should sit quiet at home and be thankful we say nothing and leave them in peace. An important matter, indeed! They quarrel and run at once to trouble the police. And you’re a fine lady! as though



it were the first time—what's one to call you if not a bad word with the trade you follow ?'

The shopkeeper shook his head and shrugged his shoulders to express his profound gratification. The police officer at once pounced upon him and said, 'What do you go barking behind your counter for, you dog ? Do you want to go to the lock-up ? You're a foul-tongued brute, and lifting your ugly paw too—do you want a taste of the birch, eh ?'

For me this scene had all the charm of novelty and it remained imprinted on my memory for ever, it was the first case of patriarchal Russian justice I had seen.

The brothel-keeper and the police continued shouting until the police superintendent came in. Without inquiring why these people were there or what they wanted, he shouted in a still more savage voice : 'Get out, be off, this isn't a public bath-house or a pot-house !'

Having driven 'the scum' out he turned to the police, 'You ought to be ashamed to allow such disorder ! How many times I have said to you the place won't be held in proper respect, low creatures like that will turn it into a perfect Bedlam, you are too easy-going with these scoundrels. What man is this ?' he asked about me.

'A prisoner brought in by Fyodor Ivanovitch, here is the document concerning him.'

The superintendent ran through the document, looked at me, met with disapproval the direct and unflinching gaze which I fixed upon him, prepared at the first word to give as good as I got, and said 'Excuse me.'

The affair of the brothel-keeper and the beer-shop man began again. She insisted on making a deposition on oath. A priest arrived. I believe they both made sworn statements ; I did not see the end of it. I was taken away to the head police-master's. I do not know why ; no one said a word to me ; then again I was brought back to

the police station, where a room had been prepared for me under the watch tower. The non-commissioned officer observed that if I wanted anything to eat, I had better send out to buy it, that the government ration had not been fixed yet and that it would not be for another two days ; moreover, that it consisted of two or three kopecks of silver and that the better-class prisoners did not claim it.

There was a dirty sofa standing by the wall ; it was past midday, I felt fearfully tired, flung myself on the sofa and slept like the dead. When I woke up, all was quiet and serene in my heart. I had been worn out of late by uncertainty about Ogaryov, now my turn too had come, the danger was no longer far off, but was all about me, the storm-cloud was overhead. This first persecution was to be our consecration.

## Chapter 10

### UNDER THE WATCH TOWER—THE LISBON POLICEMAN— THE INCENDIARIES

A MAN soon becomes used to prison, if he only has some inner resources. One quickly becomes used to the peace and complete freedom in one's cage—no anxieties, no distractions.

At first, books were not allowed; the superintendent assured me that it was forbidden to take books from my home. I asked him to buy me some. 'Something instructive, a grammar now, I might get, perhaps, but for anything more you must ask the general.' The suggestion that I should wile away the time by reading a grammar was extremely funny, nevertheless I caught at it eagerly, and asked the superintendent to buy me an Italian grammar and lexicon. I had two red notes with me, I gave him one; he at once sent an officer for the books and gave him a letter to the chief police-master in which, on the strength of the paragraph I had read, I asked him to let me know the cause of my arrest or to release me.

The local superintendent, in whose presence I wrote the letter, tried to persuade me not to send it.

'It's a mistake, sir, upon my soul, it's a mistake to trouble the general; he'll say "they are restless people," it will do you harm and be no use whatever.'

In the evening the policeman appeared and told me that the head police-master had bidden him tell me that I should know the cause of my arrest in due time. Then he pulled out of his pocket a greasy Italian grammar, and added, smiling, 'it luckily happened that there was a dictionary in it so there was no need to buy one.' Not a word was said about the change. I was on the point of writing to the chief police-master again, but the rôle

of a miniature Hampden at the Pretchistensky police station struck me as too funny.

Ten days after my arrest a little swarthy, pock-marked policeman appeared at ten o'clock in the evening with an order for me to dress and set off to the committee of inquiry.

While I was dressing the following ludicrously vexatious incident occurred. My dinner was sent me from home, a servant gave it to the non-commissioned officer below and he sent it up to me by a soldier. They were allowed to send me from home about a bottle of wine a day. N. Sazonov took advantage of this permission to send me a bottle of excellent Johannisberg. The soldier and I ingeniously uncorked the bottle with two nails, the wine had a delicate fragrance that was apparent at a distance. I looked forward to enjoying it for the next three or four days.

One must be in prison to know how much childishness remains in a man and what comfort can be found in trifles, from a bottle of wine to a trick at the expense of one's guard.

The pock-marked policeman sniffed out my bottle and turning to me asked permission to taste a little. I was vexed; however, I said that I should be delighted. I had no wine-glass. The monster took a tumbler, filled it incredibly full and drank it without taking breath; this way of imbibing spirits and wine only exists among Russians and Poles; I have seen no other people in all Europe who could empty a tumbler at a gulp or even toss off a wine-glassful. To make the loss of the wine still more bitter, the pock-marked policeman wiped his lips with a snuffy blue handkerchief, adding 'First-class Madeira.' I looked at him with hatred and spitefully rejoiced that he had not been vaccinated and nature had not spared him the smallpox.

This connoisseur of wines conducted me to the chief

police-master's house in Tverskoy Boulevard, showed me into a side-room and left me alone there. Half an hour later, a stout man with a lazy, good-natured air came into the room from the inner apartments ; he threw a portfolio of papers on the table and sent the gendarme standing at the door away on some errand.

'I suppose,' he said to me, 'you are concerned with the case of Ogaryov and the other young men who have lately been arrested ?'

I said I was.

'I happened to hear about it,' he went on, 'it's a strange case, I don't understand it.'

'I've been a fortnight in prison in connection with the case and I don't understand it, and, what's more, I simply know nothing about it.'

'A good thing, too,' he said, looking intently at me ; 'and mind you don't know anything about it. You must forgive me, if I give you a bit of advice ; you're young, your blood is still hot, you long to speak out, that's the trouble, don't forget that you know nothing about it, that's the only safe line.'

I looked at him in surprise, his face expressed nothing evil ; he guessed what I felt and with a smile said, 'I was a Moscow student myself twelve years ago.'

A clerk of some sort came in ; the stout man addressed him and, after giving him his orders, went out with a friendly nod to me, putting his finger on his lips. I never met the gentleman afterwards and I do not know who he was, but I found out the value of his advice.

Then a police-master came in, not Miller, but another called Tsinsky, and summoned me to the committee. In a large rather handsome room, five men were sitting at a table, all in military uniform, with the exception of one decrepit old man. They were smoking cigars and gaily talking together, lolling in easy chairs, with their uniforms unbuttoned. The chief police-master was presiding.

When I went in, he turned to a figure sitting meekly in a corner, and said, 'If you please, father.' Only then I noticed that there was sitting in a corner an old priest with a grey beard and a reddish-blue face. The priest was half-asleep and yawning with his hand over his mouth; his mind was far away and he was longing to get home. In a drawling, somewhat chanting voice he began exhorting me, talking of the sin of concealing the truth before the persons appointed by the Tsar, and of the uselessness of such duplicity considering the all-hearing ear of God; he did not even forget to refer to the everlasting texts, to the effect that all power is from God and that we must render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. In conclusion, he said that I must put my lips to the Gospel and the Holy Cross in confirmation of the oath (which, however, I had not given, and he did not insist on my taking) to reveal the whole truth sincerely and openly.

When he had finished he began hurriedly wrapping up the Gospel and the Cross. Tsinsky, barely rising from his seat, told him that he could go. After this he turned to me and translated the spiritual advice into secular language: 'I will only add one thing to the priest's words—it's useless for you to deny the truth, even if you wish to do so.' He pointed to the heaps of papers, letters, and portraits which were intentionally scattered about the table. 'Only an open confession can mitigate your lot; to be at liberty or in Bobruisk in the Caucasus depends on yourself.'

The questions were put to me in writing: the naïveté of some of them was amazing: 'Do you know of the existence of any secret society? Do you belong to any secret society, literary or otherwise? Who are its members? Where do they meet?'

To all these it was extremely easy to answer by the single word: 'No.'

'I see you know nothing,' said Tsinsky after looking

through the answers. 'I have warned you, you are making your position more difficult.'

With that the first examination ended.

. . . Eight years later, in a different part of the very house in which this took place, there was living the sister of the new chief police-master, a woman who had once been very handsome, and whose daughter was a beauty.

I used to visit there ; and every time I passed through the room in which Tsinsky and Co. had tried and examined us ; then and afterwards, there hung in it the portrait of Paul, whether as a reminder of the depths of degradation to which a man may be brought by unbridled passion and the misuse of power, or as an incitement of the police to every sort of brutality, I do not know, but there he was, cane in hand, snub-nosed and scowling. I stopped every time before that portrait, in old days as a prisoner, later on as a visitor. The little drawing-room close by, full of the fragrance of beauty and femininity, seemed somehow out of place in this stern house of strict discipline and police examinations ; I felt unable to be myself there, and somehow regretful that the blossom that was unfolding so beautifully should flower against the gloomy brick wall of a police office. The things that we said and that were said by the little circle of friends that gathered round them sounded so ironical, so surprising to the ear, within those walls accustomed to hear interrogations, secret information, and reports of wholesale police raids, within those walls which alone separated us from the whisper of policemen, the sighs of prisoners, the clank of gendarmes' spurs and Cossacks' sabres. . . .

A week or two later, the little pock-marked policeman came and took me to Tsinsky again. In the vestibule several men in fetters, surrounded by soldiers with guns, were sitting or lying down ; in the lobby also there were several men of different classes, unchained but strictly guarded. The little policeman told me that they were



all incendiaries. Tsinsky was out at the fire and we had to await his return ; we had arrived between nine and ten in the evening ; no one had asked for me by one o'clock in the night, and I was still sitting very quietly in the lobby with the incendiaries. First one and then another of them was sent for, the police ran backwards and forwards, chains clanked, and the soldiers were so bored that they rattled their guns and did drill exercises. About one o'clock Tsinsky arrived, sooty and grimy, and hurried straight to his study without stopping. Half an hour passed, my policeman was sent for ; he came back looking pale and upset, with his face twitching convulsively. Tsinsky poked his head out of the door after him and said : 'The whole committee has been waiting for you all the evening, Monsieur Herzen ; this blockhead brought you here when you were wanted at Prince Golitsyn's. I am very sorry you have had to wait here so long, but it is not my fault. What is one to do with such men ? I believe he has been fifty years in the service and he is still an idiot. Come, be off home now,' he added, changing to a much ruder tone as he addressed the policeman.

The little man repeated all the way home : 'O Lord, what a misfortune ! a man has no thought, no notion what is happening to him, he will be the death of me now, he would take no notice if you had not been kept waiting there, but of course it is a disgrace to him. O Lord, how unlucky !'

I forgave him my wine, particularly when he told me that he had not been nearly so frightened when he had been almost drowned near Lisbon. This last remark was so unexpected that I was overcome with senseless laughter : 'Dear me, how very strange ! However did you get to Lisbon ?' The old man had been for over twenty-five years a naval officer. One cannot but agree with the minister who assured Captain

Kopeykin <sup>1</sup> that : ‘ It has never happened yet among us in Russia that a man who has deserved well of his country should be left without recognition.’

Fate had saved him at Lisbon only to be abused by Tsinsky like a boy, after forty years’ service.

He was scarcely to blame.

The committee of inquiry formed by the governor-general did not please the Tsar ; he appointed a new one presided over by Prince Sergey Mihailovitch Golitsyn. The members of this committee were the Moscow Commandant, Staal, the other Prince Golitsyn, the colonel of gendarmes, Shubensky, and Oransky, the ex-auditor.

In the instructions from the chief police-master nothing was said about the committee having been changed ; it was very natural that the hero of Lisbon should have taken me to Tsinsky.

There was great excitement at the police-station also ; three fires had taken place that evening—and the committee had sent twice to inquire what had become of me and whether I had escaped. Anything that Tsinsky had left unsaid in his abuse the police station superintendent made up now to the hero of Lisbon ; which, indeed, was only to be expected, since the superintendent was himself partly to blame, not having inquired where I was to be sent. In a corner in the office, some one was lying on the chairs, moaning ; I looked, it was a young man of handsome appearance, neatly dressed, he was spitting blood and moaning ; the police doctor advised his being taken to the hospital as early as possible in the morning.

When the non-commissioned officer took me to my room, I extracted from him the story of the wounded man. He was an ex-officer of the Guards, he had an intrigue with some maid-servant and had been with her

<sup>1</sup> See Gogol’s *Dead Souls*.—(Translator’s Note.)

when a lodge of the house caught fire. This was the time of the greatest panic in regard to arson; indeed, not a day passed without my hearing the bell ring the alarm three or four times; from my window I saw the glare of two or three fires every night. To avoid compromising the girl, the officer climbed over the fence as soon as the alarm was sounded, and hid in the stable of the next house, waiting for an opportunity to get off. A little girl who was in the yard saw him and told the first policeman who galloped up that he was hidden in the stable; they rushed in with a crowd of people and dragged the officer out in triumph. He was so badly beaten that he died next morning.

The people who had been captured were sorted out; about half were released, the others were detained on suspicion. The police-master, Bryantchaninov, used to ride over every morning and cross-examine them for three or four hours. Sometimes the victims were thrashed or beaten, then their wailing, screams and entreaties, and the moaning of the women reached me, together with the harsh voice of the police-master and the monotonous reading of the clerk. It was awful, intolerable. At night I dreamed of those sounds and woke in a frenzy at the thought that the victims were lying on straw only a few paces from me, in chains, with lacerated wounds on their backs, and in all probability quite innocent.

To know what the Russian prisons, the Russian law-courts and the Russian police are like, one must be a peasant, a house-serf, a workman, or an artisan.

Political prisoners, who for the most part belong to the nobility, are kept in close custody and punished savagely, but their fate cannot be compared with the fate of the poor. With them the police do not stand on ceremony. To whom can the peasant or the workman go afterwards to complain, where can he find justice?

So terrible is the disorder, the brutality, the arbitrariness and the corruption of Russian justice and of the Russian police that a man of the humbler class who falls into the hands of the law is more afraid of the process of law itself than of any punishment. He looks forward with impatience to the time when he will be sent to Siberia; his martyrdom ends with the beginning of his punishment. And let us remember that three-quarters of the people taken up by the police on suspicion are released on trial, and that they have passed through the same agonies as the guilty.

Peter III. abolished torture and the Secret Chamber.

Catherine II. abolished torture.

Alexander I. abolished it once more.

Answers given 'under intimidation' are not recognised by law. The officer who tortures the accused man renders himself liable to severe punishment.

And yet all over Russia, from the Behring Straits to Taurogen, men are tortured; where it is dangerous to torture by flogging, they are tortured by insufferable heat, thirst, and salted food. In Moscow the police put an accused prisoner with bare feet on a metal floor in a temperature of ten degrees of frost; he died in the hospital which was under the supervision of Prince Meschtchersky, who told the story with indignation. The government knows all this, the governors conceal it, the Senate connives at it, the ministers say nothing, the Tsar, and the synod, the landowners and the priests all agree with Selifan<sup>1</sup> that 'there must be thrashing for the peasants are too fond of their ease, order must be kept up.'

The committee appointed to investigate the cases of incendiarism was investigating, that is, thrashing, for six months and had thrashed out nothing in the end. The Tsar was incensed and ordered that the thing was to be finished in three days. The thing was finished in

<sup>1</sup> A character in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.—(Translator's Note.)

three days. Culprits were found and condemned to punishment by the knout, by branding, and by exile to penal servitude. The porters from all the houses gathered together to look at the terrible punishment of 'the incendiaries.' By then it was winter and I was at that time in the Krutitsky Barracks. The captain of gendarmes, a good-natured old man who had been present at the punishment, told me the details. The first man condemned to the knout told the crowd in a loud voice that he swore he was innocent, that he did not know himself what he had answered under torture, then taking off his shirt he turned his back to the crowd and said : ' Look, good Christians ! '

A moan of horror ran through the crowd, his back was a dark-blue striped wound, and on that wound he was to be beaten with the knout. The murmurs and gloomy aspect of the crowd made the police hurry. The executioners dealt the legal number of blows, while others did the branding and others riveted fetters, and the business seemed to be finished. But this scene impressed the inhabitants ; in every circle in Moscow people were talking about it. The governor-general reported upon it to the Tsar. The Tsar ordered a new trial to be held, and the case of the incendiary who had protested before the punishment to be particularly inquired into.

Several months afterwards, I read in the papers that the Tsar, wishing to compensate two who had been punished by the knout, though innocent, ordered them to be given two hundred roubles a lash, and to be provided with a special passport testifying to their innocence in spite of the branding. These two were the man who had spoken to the crowd and one of his companions.

The story of the fires in Moscow in 1834, cases similar to which occurred ten years later in various provinces, remains a mystery. That the fires were

caused by arson there is no doubt; fire, 'the red cock,' is in general a very national means of revenge among us. One is continually hearing of the burning by peasants of their owners' houses, cornstacks, and granaries, but what was the cause of the incendiarism in Moscow in 1834 no one knows, and, least of all, the members of the committee of inquiry.

Before 22nd August, Coronation Day, some practical jokers dropped letters in various places in which they informed the inhabitants that they need not bother about an illumination, that there would be a fine flare-up.

The cowardly Moscow authorities were in a great fluster. The police station was filled with soldiers from early morning and a squadron of Uhlans were stationed in the yard. In the evening patrols on horse and on foot were incessantly moving about the streets. Artillery was kept in readiness. Police-masters galloped up and down with Cossacks and gendarmes. Prince Golitsyn himself rode about the town with his aides-de-camp. The military appearance of modest Moscow was strange and affected the nerves. Till late at night I lay in the window under my watch tower and looked into the yard. . . . The Uhlans who had been hurried to the place were sitting in groups, near their horses, some were mounted on their horses. Officers were walking about, looking disdainfully at the police, aides-de-camp with yellow collars arrived continually, looking anxious and, after doing nothing, went away again.

There were no fires.

After this the Tsar himself came to Moscow. He was displeased with the inquiry into our case which was only beginning, was displeased that we were left in the hands of the ordinary police, was displeased that the incendiaries had not been found—in fact, he was displeased with everything and with every one.

We soon felt the presence of the Most High.



## Chapter II

### KRUTITSKY BARRACKS—GENDARMES' TALES—OFFICERS

THREE days after the Tsar's arrival, late in the evening—all these things are done in darkness to avoid disturbing the public—a police officer came to me with instructions to collect my belongings and set off with him.

'Where are we going?' I asked.

'You will see,' was the policeman's intelligent and polite reply. After this, of course, I collected my things and set off without continuing the conversation.

We drove on and on for an hour and a half, at last we passed the Simonov Monastery and stopped at a heavy stone gate, before which two gendarmes with carbines were pacing up and down. This was the Krutitsky Monastery, converted into a barracks of gendarmes.

I was led into a little office. The clerks, the adjutants, the officers were all in light blue. The officer on duty, in a casque and full uniform, asked me to wait a little and even suggested that I should light the pipe I held in my hand. After this he proceeded to write an acknowledgment of having received a prisoner; giving it to the policeman, he went away and returned with another officer. 'Your room is ready,' said the latter, 'come along.' A gendarme held a candle for us, we went down the stairs and took a few steps across the courtyard into a long corridor lighted by a single lantern; on both sides were little doors, one of them the officer on duty opened; it led into a tiny guardroom behind which was a small, dark, cold room that smelt like a cellar. The officer who conducted me then turned to me, saying in French that he was '*désolé d'être dans la nécessité*' of searching my pockets, but military service, duty, his instructions . . . After this eloquent introduction, he very simply



turned to the policeman and indicated me with his eyes. The policeman on the spot thrust an incredibly large and hairy hand into my pockets. I observed to the police officer that this was quite unnecessary, that I would myself, if he liked, turn my pockets inside out without such violent measures; moreover, what could I have after six weeks imprisonment?

‘We know,’ said the polite officer with a smile of inimitable self-complacency, ‘how things are done in the police station.’ The officer on duty also smiled sarcastically. However, they told the policeman he need only look. I pulled out everything I had.

‘Scatter all your tobacco on the table,’ said the officer who was *désolé*.

In my tobacco pouch I had a penknife and a pencil wrapped up in paper; from the very beginning I had been thinking about them and, as I talked to the officer, I played with the tobacco pouch, until I got the penknife into my hand. I held it through the material of the pouch, and boldly shook the tobacco out on the table. The policeman poured it in again. The penknife and pencil had been saved; so there was a lesson for the officer for his proud disdain of the ordinary police.

This incident put me in the best of humours and I began gaily scrutinising my new domain.

Some of the monks’ cells, built three hundred years ago and sunk into the earth, had been turned into secular cells for political prisoners.

In my room there was a bedstead without a mattress, a little table, on it a jug of water, and beside it a chair, a thin tallow candle was burning in a big copper candlestick. The damp and cold pierced to one’s bones; the officer ordered the stove to be lighted, and then they all went away. A soldier promised to bring some hay; meanwhile, putting my greatcoat under my head, I lay down on the bare bedstead and lit my pipe.

A minute later I noticed that the ceiling was covered with 'Prussian' beetles. They had seen no light for a long time and were running towards it from all directions, crowding together, hurrying, falling on to the table, and then racing headlong, backwards and forwards, along the edge of the table.

I disliked black beetles, as I did every sort of uninvited guest; my neighbours seemed to me horribly disgusting, but there was nothing to be done, I could not begin by complaining about the black beetles and my nerves had to submit. Two or three days later, however, all the 'Prussians' moved next door to the soldier's room, where it was warmer; only occasionally a stray beetle would run in, prick up his whiskers and scurry back to get warm.

Though I continually asked the gendarme, he still kept the stove closed. I began to feel unwell and giddy, I tried to get up and knock to the soldier; I did actually get up, but with that all I remember ended. . . .

When I came to myself I was lying on the floor with a splitting headache. A tall gendarme was standing with his hands folded, staring at me blankly, as in the well-known bronze statuettes a dog stares at a tortoise.

'You have been finely suffocated, your honour,' he said, seeing that I had recovered consciousness. 'I've brought you horse-radish with salt and kvass; I have already made you sniff it, now you must drink it up.' I drank it, he lifted me up and laid me on the bed; I felt very faint, there were double windows and no pane that opened in them; the soldier went to the office to ask permission for me to go into the yard; the officer on duty told him to say that neither the colonel nor the adjutant were there, and that he could not take the responsibility. I had to remain in the room full of charcoal fumes.

I got used even to the Krutitsky Barracks, conjugating

the Italian verbs and reading some wretched little books. At first my confinement was rather strict; at nine o'clock in the evening, at the last note of the bugle, a soldier came into my room, put out the candle and locked the door. From nine o'clock in the evening until eight next morning I had to sit in darkness. I have never been a great sleeper, and in prison where I had no exercise, four hours' sleep was quite enough for me; and not to have candles was a real affliction. Moreover, the sentry uttered every quarter of an hour from both sides of the corridor a loud, prolonged shout.

A few weeks later Colonel Semyonov (brother of the celebrated actress, afterwards Princess Gagarin) allowed them to leave me a candle, forbade anything to be hung over the window, which was below the level of the courtyard, so that the sentry could see everything that was being done in the cell, and gave instructions that the sentries should not shout in the corridor.

Then the commanding officer gave us permission to have ink and to walk in the courtyard. Paper was given in a fixed amount on condition that none of the leaves were torn. I was allowed once in twenty-four hours to go, accompanied by a soldier and the officer on duty, into the yard, which was enclosed by a fence and surrounded by a cordon of sentries.

Life passed quietly and monotonously, the military punctuality gave it a mechanical regularity like the *cæsura* in verse. In the morning, with the assistance of the gendarme, I prepared coffee on the stove; at nine o'clock the officer on duty, in gloves, enormous gauntlets, in a casque and a greatcoat, appeared, clanking his sabre and bringing in with him several cubic feet of frost. At one, the gendarme brought a dirty napkin and a bowl of soup, which he always held by the edge, so that his two middle fingers were perceptibly cleaner than the others. We were fed fairly decently,

but it must not be forgotten that we were charged two roubles a day for our keep, which in the course of nine months' imprisonment ran up to a considerable sum for persons of no means. The father of one prisoner said quite simply that he had not the money; he received the cool reply that it would be stopped out of his salary. If he had not been receiving a salary, it is extremely probable that he would have been put in prison.

In conclusion, I ought to observe that a rouble and a half was sent to Colonel Semyonov at the barracks for our board from the ordnance house. There was almost a fuss about this; but the adjutant, who got the benefit of it, presented the gendarmes' division with boxes for first performances or benefit nights, and with that the matter ended.

After sunset there followed a complete stillness, which was not disturbed by the footsteps of the soldiers crunching over the snow before the window, nor the far-away calls of the sentries. As a rule I read until one o'clock and then put out my candle. Sleep carried me into freedom, sometimes it seemed as though I woke up feeling—ough, what a horrible dream I have had—prison and gendarmes—and I would rejoice that it was all a dream; and then, all at once, there would be the clank of a sabre in the corridor, or the officer on duty would open the door, accompanied by a soldier with a lantern, or the sentry would shout inhumanly, 'Who goes there?' or a bugle under my very window would outrage the morning air with its shrill reveille. . . .

In moments of dullness when I was disinclined to read, I would talk with the gendarmes who guarded me, particularly with the old fellow who had looked after me when I was overcome by the charcoal fumes. The colonel used, as a sign of favour, to free his old soldiers from regular discipline, and set them to the easy duty of guarding a prisoner; a corporal, who was a spy and

a rogue, was set over them. Five or six gendarmes made up the whole staff.

The old man, of whom I am speaking, was a simple, good-hearted creature, given to all sorts of kind actions, for which he had probably had to pay a good deal in his life. He had passed through the campaign of 1812, his chest was covered with medals, he had served his full time and remained in the army of his own free will, not knowing where to go. 'Twice,' he told me, 'I wrote to my home in the Mogilev province, but I got no answer, so it seems as though there were none of my people left: and so I feel a little uneasy to go home, one would stay there a bit and then wander off like a lost spirit, going hither and thither to beg one's bread.' How barbarously and mercilessly the army is organised in Russia with its monstrous term of service! A man's private life is everywhere sacrificed without the slightest scruple and with no compensation.

Old Filimonov had pretensions to a knowledge of German which he had studied in winter quarters after the taking of Paris. He very felicitously adapted German words to the Russian spirit, calling a horse, *fert*, eggs, *yery*, fish, *pish*, oats, *ober*, pancakes, *pankutie*.

There was a naïveté about his stories which made me sad and thoughtful. In Moldavia during the Turkish campaign of 1805 he was in the company of a captain, the most good-natured man in the world, who looked after every soldier as though he were his own son and was always foremost in action. 'A Moldavian girl had captivated him and then we saw our captain was in trouble, for, do you know, he noticed that the girl was making up to another officer. So one day he called me and a comrade—a splendid soldier, he had both his legs blown off afterwards at Maly-Yaroslavets—and began telling us how the Moldavian girl had treated him and asked would we care to help him and give her a lesson.

"To be sure, sir," we said, "we are always glad to do our best for your honour." He thanked us and pointed out the house in which the officer lived, saying, "You wait on the bridge at night; she will certainly go to him, you seize her without any noise and drop her in the river." "That is easily done, your honour," we said, and my comrade and I got a sack ready. We were sitting there when towards midnight the Moldavian girl runs up. "Why, you are in a hurry, madam," said we, and gave her one on the head. She never uttered a squeal, poor dear, and we popped her into the sack and over into the river; and next day the captain went to the officer and said: "Don't you be angry with your Moldavian girl, we detained her a little, and now she is in the river, and I am ready for a little fun with you with the sabre or with pistols, which you like." So they hacked at each other. The officer gave our captain a bad cut on the chest, the poor, dear man pined away and a few months later gave up his soul to God.

'And the Moldavian girl was drowned, then?' I asked.

'Yes, she was drowned,' answered the soldier.

I looked with surprise at the childish carelessness with which the old gendarme told me this story. And he, as though guessing what I felt or thinking of it for the first time, added, to soothe me and pacify his conscience: 'A heathen woman, sir, as good as not christened, that sort of people.'

On every Imperial holiday the gendarmes are given a glass of vodka. The sergeant allowed Filimonov to refuse his share for five or six times and to receive them all at once. Filimonov scored on a wooden tally-stick how many glasses he had missed, and on the most important holiday would go for them. He would pour this vodka into a bowl, would crumble bread into it and eat it with a spoon. After this meal he would light a

big pipe with a tiny mouthpiece, filled with tobacco of incredible strength which he used to cut up himself, and therefore rather wittily call 'Self-Cut.' As he smoked he would fold himself up in a little window, bent double—there were no chairs in the soldiers' rooms—and sing this song :

‘The maids come out into the meadow  
Where was an anthill and a flower.’

As he got more drunk the words would become more inarticulate until he fell asleep. Imagine the health of a man who had been twice wounded and at over sixty could still survive such feasts !

Before I leave these Flemish barrack scenes *à la* Wouverman<sup>1</sup> and *à la* Callot,<sup>2</sup> and this prison gossip, which is like the reminiscences of all prisoners, I will say a few words about the officers.

The greater number among them were rather good-natured men, by no means spies, but men who had by chance come into the gendarmes' division. Young noblemen with little or no education and no fortune, who did not know where to lay their heads, they were gendarmes because they had found no other job. They performed their duties with military exactitude, but I never observed a trace of zeal in any of them, except the adjutant, but then he, of course, was an adjutant.

When the officers had made my acquaintance, they did all sorts of little things to alleviate my lot, and it would be a sin to complain of them.

One young officer told me that in 1831 he was sent to find and arrest a Polish landowner, who was in hiding somewhere in the neighbourhood of his estate. He was charged with being in relations with revolutionary

<sup>1</sup> Philip Wouverman (1619-1668), a Dutch master who excelled in drinking and hunting scenes.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Callot (1592-1635), a French painter and engraver.—*(Translator's Notes.)*



emissaries. From evidence that the officer collected, he found out where the landowner must be hidden, went there with his company, put a cordon round the house and entered it with two gendarmes. The house was empty—they walked through the rooms, peeping into everything and found no one anywhere, but yet some traces showed clearly that there had been persons in the house lately. Leaving the gendarmes below, the young man went a second time up to the attic; looking round attentively he saw a little door which led to a loft or some little cupboard; the door was fastened on the inside, he pushed it with his foot, it opened, and a tall, handsome woman stood facing him. She pointed in silence to a man who held in his arms a girl of about twelve, who was almost unconscious. This was the Pole with his wife and child. The officer was embarrassed. The tall woman noticed this and asked him: 'And will you have the cruelty to ruin them?' The officer apologised, saying the usual commonplaces about the inviolability of his military oath, and his duty, and, at last, in despair, seeing that his words had no effect, ended with the question: 'What am I to do?' The woman looked proudly at him and said, pointing to the door: 'Go down and say there is no one here.' 'Upon my word, I don't know how it happened and what was the matter with me, but I went down from the attic and told the corporal to collect the men. A couple of hours later we were looking vigorously in another part, while he was making his way over the frontier. Well, woman! I admit it!'

Nothing in the world can be more narrow-minded and more inhuman than wholesale condemnation of entire classes in accordance with the label, the moral catalogue, the leading characteristics of the class. Names are dreadful things. Jean Paul Richter says with absolute truth: 'If a child tells a lie, frighten him with his bad conduct, tell him he has told a lie, but don't tell him

he is a liar. You destroy his moral confidence in himself by defining him as a liar. "That is a murderer," we are told, and at once we fancy a hidden dagger, a brutal expression, evil designs, as though murder were a permanent employment, the trade of the man who has happened once in his life to kill some one. One cannot be a spy or trade in the vice of others and remain an honest man, but one may be a police officer without losing all human dignity; just as one may conceivably find women of a tender heart and even nobility of character in the unhappy victims of "public incontinence."

I have an aversion for people who cannot, or will not, take the trouble to go beyond the name, to step across the barrier of crime, of a complicated false position, but either chastely turn aside, or harshly thrust it all away from them. This is usually done by cold, abstract natures, egoistic and revolting in their purity, or base, vulgar natures who have not yet happened, or have not needed, to show themselves in practice. They are through sympathy at home in the dirty depths into which others have sunk.

## Chapter 12

THE INVESTIGATION—GOLITSYN SENIOR—GOLITSYN JUNIOR  
—GENERAL STAAL—SOKOLOVSKY—SENTENCE

**B**UT with all this what of our case, what of the investigation and the trial ?

They were no more successful in the new committee than in the old. The police had been on our track for a long time, but in their zeal and impatience could not wait to find anything adequate, and did something silly. They had sent a retired officer called Skaryatka to lead us on and catch us ; he made acquaintance with almost all of our circle, but we very soon guessed what he was and held aloof from him. Other young men, for the most part students, had not been so cautious, but these others had no serious connection with us.

One student, on completing his studies, gave a supper to his friends on 24th June 1834. Not one of us was at the festivity, indeed not one of us had been invited. The young men drank too much, played the fool, danced the mazurka, and among other things sang Sokolovsky's well-known song on the accession of Nicholas :

' The Emperor of Russia  
Has gone to realms above,  
The operating surgeon  
Slit his belly open.

' The Government is weeping  
And all the people weep ;  
There's coming to rule over us  
Constantine the freak.

' But to the King of Heaven,  
Almighty God above,  
Our Tsar of blessed memory  
Has handed a petition.

‘When He read the paper,  
Moved to pity, God  
Gave us Nicholas instead,  
The blackguard, the . . .’<sup>1</sup>

In the evening Skaryatka suddenly remembered that it was his name-day, told a tale of how advantageously he had sold a horse, and invited the students to his quarters, promising them a dozen of champagne. They all went, the champagne appeared, and the host, staggering, proposed that they should once more sing Sokolovsky’s song. In the middle of the singing the door opened and Tsinsky with the police walked in. All this was crude, stupid, clumsy, and at the same time unsuccessful.

The police wanted to catch us; they were looking for external evidence to involve in the case some five or six men whom they had already marked, and only succeeded in catching twenty innocent persons.

It is not easy, however, to disconcert the Russian police. Within a fortnight they arrested us as implicated in the supper case. In Sokolovsky’s possession they found letters from S——, in S——’s possession letters from Ogaryov, and in Ogaryov’s possession my letters. Nevertheless, nothing was discovered. The first investigation failed. To ensure the success of the second, the Tsar sent from Petersburg the choicest of the inquisitors, A. F. Golitsyn.

This kind of person is rare in Russia. It is represented among us by Mordvinov, the famous head of the Third Section, Pelikan, the rector of Vilna, and a few accommodating Letts and degraded Poles.<sup>2</sup> But unluckily for the inquisition, Staal, the Commandant of

<sup>1</sup> The epithet in the last line is left to the imagination in Russian also.—(*Translator’s Note.*)

<sup>2</sup> Among those who have distinguished themselves in this line of late years is the notorious Liprandi, who drew up a scheme for founding an Academy of Espionage (1858).

Moscow, was appointed the first member. Staal, a straightforward military man, a gallant old general, went into the case and found that it consisted of two circumstances that had no connection with each other : the affair of the supper party, for which the police ought to be punished, and the arrest for no apparent reason of persons whose only guilt, so far as could be seen, lay in certain half-expressed opinions, for which it would be both difficult and absurd to try them.

Staal's opinion did not please Golitsyn junior. The dispute between them took a bitter character ; the old warrior flared up, wrathfully struck the floor with his sabre and said : ' Instead of ruining people, you had better draw up a report on the advisability of closing all the schools and universities ; that would warn other unfortunate youths ; however, you can do what you like, but you must do it without me. I won't set foot in the committee again.' With these words the old man hurriedly left the room.

The Tsar was informed of this the same day.

In the morning when the commandant appeared with his report, the Tsar asked him why he would not attend the committee ; Staal told him why.

' What nonsense ! ' replied the Tsar, ' to quarrel with Golitsyn, for shame ! I trust you will attend the committee as before.'

' Sire,' answered Staal, ' spare my grey hairs. I have lived to reach them without the slightest stain on my honour. My zeal is known to your Majesty, my blood, the remnant of my days are yours, but this is a question of my honour—my conscience revolts against what is being done in the committee.'

The Tsar frowned. Staal bowed himself out, and was not once in the committee afterwards.

This anecdote, the accuracy of which is not open to the slightest doubt, throws great light on the character

of Nicholas. How was it that it did not enter his head that if a man whom he could not but respect, a brave warrior, an old man who had won his position, so obstinately besought him to spare his honour, the case could not be quite clean? He could not have done less than insist on Staal's explaining the matter in the presence of Golitsyn. He did not do this, but gave orders that we should be confined more strictly.

When he had gone there were only enemies of the accused in the committee, presided over by a simple-hearted old man, Prince S. M. Golitsyn, who knew as little about the case nine months after it had begun as he did nine months before it began. He preserved a dignified silence, very rarely put in a word, and at the end of an examination invariably asked: 'May we let him go?' 'We may,' Golitsyn junior would answer, and the senior would say with dignity to the prisoner, 'You may go.'

My first examination lasted four hours.

The questions were of two kinds. The object of the first was to discover a manner of thinking, 'in opposition to the spirit of government, revolutionary opinions, imbued with the pernicious doctrines of Saint Simon,' as Golitsyn junior and the auditor Oransky expressed it.

These questions were easy, but they were hardly questions. In the papers and letters that had been seized, the opinions were fairly simply expressed; the questions could in reality only relate to the substantial fact of whether a man had or had not written the words in question. The committee thought it necessary to add to every written phrase, 'How do you explain the following passage in your letter?'

Of course it was useless to explain; I wrote evasive and empty phrases in reply. In one letter the auditor discovered the phrase: 'All constitutional parties lead to nothing, they are contracts between a master and his

slaves; the problem is not to make things better for the slaves, but to put an end to their being slaves.' When I had to explain this phrase I observed that I saw no obligation to defend constitutional government, and that, if I had defended it, it would have been charged against me.

'A constitutional form of government may be attacked from two sides,' Golitsyn junior observed in his nervous hissing voice; 'you do not attack it from the point of view of monarchy, or you would not talk about slaves.'

'In that I err in company with the Empress Catherine II., who ordered that her subjects should not be called slaves.'

Golitsyn, breathless with anger at this ironical reply, said: 'You seem to imagine that we are assembled here to conduct scholastic arguments, that you are defending a thesis in the university.'

'With what object, then, do you ask for explanations?'

'You appear not to understand what is wanted of you.'

'I don't understand.'

'What obstinacy there is in all of them,' Golitsyn senior, the president, added, shrugging his shoulders and glancing at Shubensky, the colonel of gendarmes. I smiled. 'Just like Ogaryov,' the simple-hearted president observed.

A pause followed, the committee was assembled in Golitsyn senior's library; I turned to the bookshelves and began examining the books. Among other things there was an edition in many volumes of the works of Saint Simon. 'Here,' I said, turning to the president, 'is it not unjust? I am being tried on account of Saint-Simonism, while you, prince, have twenty volumes of his works.'

As the good-natured old man had never read anything in his life, he could not think what to answer. But Golitsyn junior looked at me with the eyes of a viper and



asked : ' Don't you see that those are the memoirs of the Duc de Saint Simon of the time of Louis XIV. ? '

The president with a smile gave me a nod that signified, ' Well, my boy, you put your foot in it, didn't you ? ' and said, ' You can go. '

While I was in the doorway the president asked : ' Is he the one who wrote about Peter the Great, that thing you were showing me ? '

' Yes,' answered Shubensky.

I stopped.

' *Il a des moyens,*' observed the president

' So much the worse. Poison in clever hands is all the more dangerous,' added the inquisitor ; ' a very pernicious and quite incorrigible young man. '

My sentence lay in those words.

Apropos of Saint Simon. When the police-master seized Ogaryov's books and papers, he laid aside a volume of Thiers' *History of the French Revolution*, then found a second volume, a third, up to an eighth. At last he could bear it no longer, and said : ' Good Lord, what a number of revolutionary books . . . and here is another,' he added, giving the policeman Cuvier's *Discours sur les Révolutions du Globe Terrestre*.

The second kind of question was more complicated. In them all sorts of police traps and inquisitorial tricks were made use of to confuse, entangle, and involve one in contradictions. Hints of evidence given by others and all sorts of moral tests were employed. It is not worth while to repeat them, it is enough to say that all their devices did not draw any of the four of us into conflicting statements.

After I had received my last question, I was sitting alone in the little room in which we wrote. All at once the door opened and Golitsyn junior walked in with a gloomy and anxious face. ' I have come,' he said, ' to have a few words with you before your evidence is

completed. My late father's long connection with yours makes me take a special interest in you. You are young and may still make a career; to do so you must clear yourself of this affair . . . and fortunately it depends on yourself. Your father has taken your arrest deeply to heart and is living now in the hope that you will be released: Prince Sergey Mihailovitch and I have just been speaking about it and we are genuinely ready to do all we can; give us the means of assisting you.'

I saw the drift of his words, the blood rushed to my head, I gnawed my pen with vexation. He went on: 'You are going straight under the white strap, or to the fortress, on the way you will kill your father; he will not survive the day when he sees you in the grey overcoat of a soldier.'

I tried to say something but he interrupted me:

'I know what you want to say. Have a little patience! That you had designs against the government is evident. To merit the mercy of the Most High you must give proofs of your penitence. You are obstinate, you give evasive answers and from a false sense of honour you spare men of whom we know more than you do and *who have not been so discreet as you*<sup>1</sup>; you will not help them, and they will drag you down with them to ruin. Write a letter to the committee, simply, frankly, say that you feel your guilt, that you were led away by your youth, name the unfortunate, misguided men who have led you astray. . . . Are you willing at this easy price to purchase your future and your father's life?'

'I know nothing and have not a word to add to my evidence,' I replied.

Golitsyn got up and said coldly: 'As you please, it is not our fault!' With that the examination ended.

In the January or February of 1835 I was before the

<sup>1</sup> I need not say that this was a barefaced lie, a shameful police trap.

committee for the last time. I was summoned to read through my answers, to add to them if I wished, and to sign them.

Only Shubensky was present. When I had finished reading them over I said to him : ' I should like to know what charge can be made against a man upon these questions and upon these answers ? Under what article of the Code do you bring me ? '

' The Imperial Code is drawn up for criminals of a different kind,' observed the light-blue colonel.

' That's a different point. After reading over all these literary exercises, I cannot believe that that makes up the whole charge on account of which I have been in prison over six months.'

' But do you really imagine,' replied Shubensky, ' that we believe you that you have not formed a secret society ? '

' Where is the society ? '

' It is your luck that no traces have been found, that you have not succeeded in doing anything. We stopped you in time, that is, to speak plainly, we have saved you.'

It was the story of the locksmith's wife and her husband in Gogol's *Inspector General* over again.

When I had signed, Shubensky rang the bell and told them to summon the priest. The priest came up and wrote below my signature that all the evidence had been given by me voluntarily and without any compulsion. I need hardly say that he had not been present at the examination, and that he had not even the decency to ask me how it had been. (It was my impartial witness outside the gate again !)

At the end of the investigation, prison conditions were somewhat relaxed. Members of our families could obtain permits for interviews. So passed another two months.

In the middle of March our sentence was ratified. No one knew what it was ; some said we were being sent to

the Caucasus, others that we should be taken to Bobruisk, others again hoped that we should all be released (this was the sentence which was proposed by Staal and sent separately by him to the Tsar; he advised that our imprisonment should be taken as equivalent to punishment).

At last, on 20th March, we were all assembled at Prince Golitsyn's to hear our sentence. This was a gala day for us. We saw each other for the first time after our arrest.

Noisily, gaily embracing and shaking hands, we stood surrounded by a cordon of gendarmes and garrison officers. This meeting cheered us all up; there was no end to the questions and the anecdotes.

Sokolovsky was present, pale and somewhat thinner, but as brilliantly amusing as ever.

The author of *The Fabric of the World* and of *Heveri* and other rather good poems, had naturally great poetic talent, but was not wildly original enough to dispense with culture, nor sufficiently well-educated to develop his talent. A charming rake, a poet in life, he was not in the least a political man. He was amusing, charming, a merry companion in merry moments, a 'bon vivant,' fond of having a good time, as we all were, perhaps a little too much so.

Having dropped accidentally from a carousal into prison, Sokolovsky behaved extremely well, he grew up in confinement. The auditor of the committee, a pedant, a pietist, a detective, who had grown thin and grey-headed in envy and slander, not daring from religion and devotion to the throne to understand the last two verses of his poem in their grammatical sense, asked Sokolovsky 'to whom do those rude words at the end of the song refer?'

'Rest assured,' said Sokolovsky, 'not to the Tsar, and I would particularly draw your attention to that extenuating circumstance.'

The auditor shrugged his shoulders, turned up his eyes to the ceiling and after gazing a long time in silence at Sokolovsky took a pinch of snuff.

Sokolovsky was arrested in Petersburg and sent to Moscow without being told where he was being taken. The police often perpetrate these jests among us, and quite unnecessarily. It is the form their creative fancy takes. There is no occupation in the world so prosaic, so revolting that it has not its artistic yearnings, its craving for decoration and adornment. Sokolovsky was taken straight to prison and put into a dark cell. Why was he put in prison while we were kept in barracks?

He had two or three shirts with him and nothing else at all. In England every one on being brought into prison is at once put into a bath, but with us they take every precaution against cleanliness.

If Dr. Haas had not sent Sokolovsky a bundle of his own linen he would have been crusted with dirt.

Dr. Haas was a very original eccentric person. The memory of this 'crazy and fanatical' man ought not to be lost in the rubbish heap of official necrologies describing the virtues of persons of the first two grades which no one ever heard of before their death.

A thin little, waxen-looking old man, in a black, swallow-tail coat, short trousers, black silk stockings and shoes with buckles, he looked as though he had just come out of some drama of the eighteenth century. In this *grand gala* of funerals and weddings, and in the agreeable climate of the northern latitude of fifty-nine degrees, Haas used every week to drive to the *étape* on the Sparrow Hills when a batch of convicts were being sent off. In the capacity of prison doctor he had access to them, he used to go to inspect them and always brought with him a basket full of all manner of things, provisions and dainties of all sorts—walnuts, cakes, oranges, and apples, for the women. This aroused the wrath and indignation

of the benevolent ladies who were afraid of giving pleasure by philanthropy, and afraid of being more charitable than was necessary to save the convicts from dying of hunger and cold.

But Haas was not easy to move, and after listening mildly to reproaches for his 'foolish spoiling of the female convicts,' would rub his hands and say: 'Be so kind to see, gracious madam, a bit of bread, a copper every one will give them, but a sweet or an orange for long they will see not, no one gives them, that I can from your words deduce; I do them this pleasure for that it will not a long time be repeated.'

Haas lived in the hospital. A patient came before dinner to consult him. Haas examined him and went into his study to write some prescription. On his return he found neither the patient nor the silver forks and spoons which had been lying on the table. Haas called the porter and asked him if any one had come in besides the patient. The porter grasped the position, rushed out and returned a minute later with the spoons and the patient, whom he had stopped with the help of another hospital porter. The rascal fell at the doctor's feet and besought mercy. Haas was overcome with confusion.

'Go for the police,' he said to one of the porters, and to the other, 'and you send the secretary here at once.'

The porters, pleased at the capture and at their share in the business altogether, ran off, and Haas, taking advantage of their absence, said to the thief, 'You are a false man, you have deceived and tried to rob me. God will judge you . . . and now run quickly to the back gates before the porters come back . . . but stay, perhaps you have no money, here is half a rouble, but try to reform your soul; from God you will not escape as from the policeman.'

At this even the members of his own household protested. But the incorrigible doctor maintained his

point: 'Theft is a great vice; but I know the police, I know how they torment them—they will question him, they will flog him; to give up one's neighbour to the lash is a far worse vice; besides, who can tell, perhaps what I have done may touch his heart!'

His friends shook their heads and said, '*Er hat einen raptus*'; the benevolent ladies said, '*C'est un brave homme mais ce n'est pas tout à fait en règle, cela,*' and tapped their foreheads. And Haas rubbed his hands and went his own way.

. . . Sokolovsky had hardly finished his anecdotes, when several others speaking at once began to tell theirs; it was as though we had all returned from a long journey—there was no end to the questions, jokes, and witticisms.

Physically, S—— had suffered more than the rest; he was thin and had lost part of his hair. He had been at his mother's in the country in the Tambov province when he heard that we had been arrested, and at once set off for Moscow, for fear that his mother should be alarmed by a visit of the gendarmes, but he caught cold on the way and reached home in a high fever. The police found him in bed, and it was impossible to move him to the police station. He was placed under arrest at home, a soldier of the police station was put on guard in the bedroom and the local police superintendent was told off to act as brother-of-mercy by the patient's bedside, so that on recovering consciousness after delirium he met the attentive glance of the one, or the battered countenance of the other.

At the beginning of the winter he was moved to the Lefortovsky Hospital; it appeared there was not a single empty private room for a prisoner, but such trifles were not deemed worth considering; a corner screened off apart, with no stove, was found, the sick man was put in this southern verandah and a sentry told off to watch him. What the temperature in this hole was in winter



may be judged from the fact that the sentry was so benumbed with cold at night that he would go into the corridor to warm himself at the stove, begging S—— not to tell of it. The hospital authorities themselves saw that such tropical quarters were impossible in a latitude so near the pole, and moved S—— to a room near the one in which frost-bitten patients were rubbed.

Before we had time to describe and listen to half our adventures, the adjutants began suddenly bustling about, the gendarmes' officers drew themselves up, and the police set themselves to rights: the door opened solemnly and little Prince Sergey Mihailovitch Golitsyn walked in *en grande tenue* with a ribbon across his shoulder; Tsinsky was in a uniform of the suite, even the auditor, Oransky, put on some sort of pale-green civil-military uniform for the joyful occasion. The commandant, of course, had not come.

Meanwhile the noise and laughter had risen to such a pitch that the auditor came fiercely into the room and observed that loud conversation and, above all, laughter seemed a flagrant disrespect to the will of the Most High, which we were about to hear.

The doors were opened. Officers divided us into three groups: in the first was Sokolovsky, the painter Utkin, and an officer called Ibaev; we were in the second; in the third, *tutti frutti*.

The sentence regarding the first category was read aloud. It was terrible; condemned for high treason, they were sent to the Schlüsselburg for an indefinite period. When Oransky, drawling to give himself dignity, read with emphasis that for 'insulting the Majesty and Most August Family, *et cetera*,' Sokolovsky observed: 'Well, I never insulted the family.'

Among his papers besides this poem were found some resolutions written in jest as though by the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch, with intentional mistakes in

spelling, and those orthographical errors helped to convict him.

Tsinsky, to show that he could be free and easy and affable, said to Sokolovsky after the sentence: 'Hey, have you ever been in Schlüsselburg before?' 'Last year,' Sokolovsky answered promptly, 'as though I knew what was coming, I drank a bottle of Madeira there.' Two years later Utkin died in the fortress. Sokolovsky, half dead, was released and sent to the Caucasus; he died at Pyatigorsk. Some remnant of shame and conscience led the government after the death of two to transfer the third to Perm. Ibaev only died in the spiritual sense: he became a mystic.

Utkin, 'a free artist confined in prison,' as he described himself at the examinations, was a man of forty; he had never taken part in any kind of political affair, but, being of a generous and impulsive temperament, he gave free rein to his tongue in the committee and was abrupt and rude in his answers. For this he was done to death in a damp cell, in which the water trickled down the walls.

Ibaev's greater guilt lay in his epaulettes. Had he not been an officer, he would never have been so punished. The man had happened to be present at some supper party, had probably drunk too much and sung like all the rest, but certainly neither more nor louder than the others.

Our turn came. Oransky wiped his spectacles, cleared his throat, and began reverently announcing the will of the Most High. The Tsar, after examining the report of the committee and taking into special consideration the youth of the criminals, *commanded that we should not be brought to trial*, and informed us that by law we ought, as men guilty of high treason by singing seditious songs, to lose our lives or, alternatively, to be sentenced to penal servitude for life. Instead of this, the Tsar in his infinite mercy forgave the greater number

of the guilty, leaving them in their present abode under the supervision of the police. The more guilty among them he commanded to be put under reformatory treatment, which consisted in being sent to civilian duty for an indefinite period to remote provinces, to live under the superintendence of the local police authorities.

It appeared that there were six of the 'more guilty': Ogaryov, S——, Lahtin, Obolensky, Sorokin, and I. I was to be sent to Perm. Among those condemned was Lahtin, who had not been arrested at all. When he was summoned to the committee to hear the sentence, he supposed that it was as a warning, to be punished by hearing how others were punished. The story was that some one of Prince Golitsyn's circle, being angry with Lahtin's wife, had prepared this agreeable surprise for him. A man of delicate health, he died three years later in exile.

When Oransky had finished reading, Colonel Shubensky stepped forward. In choice language and in the style of Lomonossov he informed us that it was due to the good offices of the noble gentleman who had presided at the committee that the Tsar had been so merciful.

Shubensky waited for all of us to thank Prince Golitsyn, but this did not come off.

Some of those who were pardoned nodded, stealing a stealthy glance at us as they did so.

We stood with folded arms, making not the slightest sign that our hearts were touched by the Imperial and princely mercy.

Then Shubensky thought of another dodge and, addressing Ogaryov, said: 'You are going to Penza; do you imagine that that is by chance? Your father is lying paralysed at Penza and the prince besought the Tsar to fix that town, that your being near might to some extent alleviate the blow of your exile for him. Do you not think you have reason to thank the prince?'

There was no help for it, Ogaryov made a slight bow. This was what they were trying to get.

The good-natured old man was pleased at this, and next, I don't know why, he summoned me. I stepped forward with the devout intention of not thanking him whatever he or Shubensky might say; besides, I was being sent farther away than any and to the nastiest town.

'You are going to Perm,' said Prince Golitsyn. I said nothing. He was disconcerted and, to say something, added, 'I have an estate there.'

'Would you care to send some commission through me to your steward?' I asked with a smile.

'I do not give commissions to people like you—Carbonari,' added the resourceful old man.

'Then what do you wish of me?'

'Nothing.'

'I thought you called me.'

'You can go,' Shubensky interposed.

'Allow me,' I replied, 'since I am here to remind you that you told me, Colonel, last time I was before the committee, that no one accused me of being connected with the supper-party affair. Yet in the sentence it is stated that I was one of those guilty in connection with that affair. There is some mistake here.'

'Do you wish to protest against the decision of the Most High?' observed Shubensky. 'You had better take care that Perm is not changed to something worse. I shall order your words to be taken down.'

'I meant to ask you to do so. In the sentence the words occur "on the report of the committee." I am protesting against your report and not against the will of the Most High. I appeal to the prince: there was no question in my case of a supper party or of songs, was there?'

'As though you do not know,' said Shubensky, beginning to turn pale with wrath, 'that you are ten times

more guilty than those who were at the supper party. He now '—he pointed to one of those who had been pardoned—' in a state of intoxication sang some filthy song, but afterwards he begged forgiveness on his knees with tears. But you are still far from a sign of penitence.'

The gentleman at whom the colonel pointed said nothing, but hung his head and flushed crimson. . . .

It was a good lesson, much good his meanness did him ! . . .

'Excuse me, it is not the point whether my guilt is greater or not,' I went on, 'but, if I am a murderer, I don't want to be considered a thief. I don't want it to be said of me, even in justification, that I did something in a "state of intoxication," as you expressed it just now.'

'If I had a son who showed such stubbornness I would myself beg the Tsar to send him to Siberia.'

At this point the chief police-master interposed some incoherent nonsense. It is a pity that Golitsyn junior was not present, it would have been an opportunity for his eloquence.

It all ended, of course, in nothing.

Lahtin went up to Prince Golitsyn and begged that his departure might be deferred. 'My wife is with child,' he said.

'I am not responsible for that,' answered Golitsyn.

A wild beast, a mad dog when it bites, looks grave and sticks up its tail, but this crazy aristocrat, though he had the reputation of a good-natured man, was not ashamed to make this vulgar joke.

We were left once more for a quarter of an hour in the room, and, in spite of the zealous upbraidings of the gendarmes and police officers, warmly embraced one another and took a long farewell. Except Obolensky I saw none of them again until I came back from Vyatka.

Departure was before us.

Prison had been a continuation of our past ; but our departure into the wilds was a complete break with it.

Our youthful existence in our circle of friends was over.

Our exile would probably last several years. Where and how should we meet, and should we ever meet ? . . .

I regretted my old life, and I had to leave it so abruptly . . . without saying good-bye. I had no hope of seeing Ogaryov. Two of my friends had succeeded in seeing me during the last few days, but that was not enough for me.

If I could but once again see my youthful comforter and press her hand, as I had pressed it in the graveyard. . . . I longed both to take leave of my past and to greet my future in her person. . . .

We did see each other for a few minutes on the 9th of April 1835, on the day before I was sent off into exile.

For years I kept that day sacred in my memory ; it was one of the happiest moments in my life.

Why must the thought of that day and of all the bright days of my past bring back so much that is terrible ? . . . The grave, the wreath of dark-red roses, two children holding my hand—torches, crowds of exiles, the moon, the warm sea under the mountain-side, the words that I did not understand and that wrung my heart. . . .

All is over !

## Chapter 13

EXILE—THE MAYOR AT POKROVO—THE VOLGA—PERM

ON the morning of the 10th of April an officer of gendarmes took me to the house of the governor-general. There, in the private part of the building, my relatives were allowed to come and say good-bye to me.

Of course it was all awkward and wrung the heart; the prying spies and clerks, the reading of the instructions to the gendarme who was to take me, the impossibility of saying anything without witnesses: in fact, more distressing and painful surroundings could not be imagined.

I heaved a sigh of relief when at last the carriage rolled off along Vladimírka.

‘Per me si va nella città dolente,  
Per me si va nel eterno dolore——’

At a station somewhere I wrote those two lines, which apply equally well to the portals of Hell and the Siberian high-road.

Seven versts from Moscow there is a restaurant called ‘Perov’s’; there one of my most intimate friends had promised to wait for me. I suggested to the gendarme a drink of vodka. It was a long way from the town. We went in, but my friend was not there. I tried every device to linger in the tavern; at last the gendarme would stay no longer and the driver was starting the horses—when suddenly a troika dashed up straight to the restaurant. I flew to the door . . . two strangers, merchants’ sons, out for a spree, noisily dismounted from the chaise. I looked into the distance—not one moving point, not one man could be seen on the road to Moscow . . . it was bitter to get in and drive off. I gave the driver twenty kopecks, and we flew like an arrow from the bow.



We drove without stopping; the gendarme had been ordered to do not less than two hundred versts in the twenty-four hours. This would have been quite endurable at any time but the beginning of April. In places the road was covered with ice, in places with mud and water; moreover, as we drove towards Siberia it got worse and worse at every station.

The first incident of my journey was at Pokrovo.

We had lost several hours owing to the ice which was floating down the river and cutting off all communication with the opposite bank. The gendarme was in a nervous fidget; all at once the superintendent of the posting station at Pokrovo announced that there were no horses. The gendarme pointed out that in the permit he was instructed to give them couriers' horses if there were no post horses. The superintendent replied that those horses had been taken by the Deputy Minister of Home Affairs. I need hardly say that the gendarme began to quarrel and made a row. The superintendent ran to try and get private horses and the gendarme went with him.

I got tired of waiting for them in the superintendent's dirty room. I went out at the gate and began walking in front of the house. It was my first walk unescorted by a soldier after nine months' imprisonment.

I had walked up and down for half an hour when suddenly I was met by a man wearing a uniform with epaulettes and a blue *pour le mérite* on his neck. He looked at me with marked persistence, passed me, and at once turning back asked me with a fierce air: 'Is it you who are being taken by a gendarme to Perm?'

'Yes,' I answered without stopping.

'Excuse me, excuse me, but how dare he? . . .'

'With whom have I the honour to speak?'

'I am the mayor,' answered the stranger in a voice which betrayed a profound sense of the dignity of that public position. 'Upon my soul! I am expecting the

Deputy Minister from hour to hour, and here there are political prisoners walking about the streets. What an ass your gendarme is !’

‘ Will you please address yourself to the gendarme in person.’

‘ It is not a matter of addressing myself, I ’ll arrest him. I ’ll order him a hundred strokes and send you on with a policeman.’

I nodded without waiting for him to finish his speech and strode rapidly back into the station.

From the window I could hear him fuming at the gendarme and threatening all sorts of things. The gendarme apologised but did not seem much frightened. Three minutes later they both came in. I was sitting turned toward the window and did not look at them.

From the mayor’s questions to the gendarme, I saw that he was consumed by the desire to find out for what offence, how and why, I was being sent into exile. I remained obstinately silent. The mayor began addressing me and the gendarme indiscriminately : ‘ No one cares to enter into our position. Do you suppose it is pleasant for me to have to swear at a soldier and cause unpleasantness to a man whom I have never seen in my life ? It is the responsibility ! The mayor is in charge of the town. Whatever happens, I have to answer for it ; if government funds are stolen, it is my fault ; if the church is burnt down, it is my fault ; if there are a great many men drunk in the street, it is my fault ; if there is not enough liquor drunk, it is my fault too ’ (the last phrase pleased him very much and he went on in a more cheerful tone). ‘ It’s a good thing you met me, but if you had met the Minister and you walking up and down, he would have asked, how is this, a political prisoner out for a walk ? Put the mayor under arrest. . . .’

At last I was weary of his eloquence and, turning to him, I said : ‘ Do what your duty requires, but I beg you

to spare me your admonitions. I see from what you say that you expect me to bow to you; it is not my habit to bow to strangers.'

The mayor was confused.

'It is always like that among us,' A—— A—— used to say; 'whichever is first to begin scolding and shouting always gets the best of it. If you allow an official to raise his voice, you are lost; hearing himself yelling, he becomes a wild beast. If at his first rude word you begin shouting, he is invariably scared and gives way, thinking you are a determined person and that such persons had better not be irritated too much.'

The mayor sent the gendarme to inquire about horses and, turning to me, observed by way of apology: 'I have acted like this for the sake of the soldier; you don't know what our soldiers are like—one must not allow the slightest slackness, but, believe me, I can discriminate—allow me to ask you what unlucky chance . . .'

'At the conclusion of our trial we were forbidden to speak of it.'

'In that case . . . Of course . . . I do not venture . . .' and the mayor's eyes expressed agonies of curiosity. He paused.

'I had a distant relative, he was a year in the Peter-Paul fortress. You see, I, too—excuse me, it worries me. I believe you are still angry? I am a military man, stern, accustomed to the service; I went into the regiment at seventeen. I have a hasty temper, but it is all over in a minute. I won't touch your gendarme, the devil take him entirely. . . .'

The gendarme came in with the reply that the horses could not be driven in from the grazing-ground in less than an hour.

The mayor informed him that he forgave him on my intercession. Then turning to me he added:

'And to show that you are not angry, you will not

refuse my request. I live only two doors away; allow me to ask you to take pot-luck at lunch with me.'

This was so funny after our encounter that I went to the mayor's and ate his dried sturgeon and caviare and drank his vodka and Madeira.

He became so affable that he told me all his domestic affairs, even describing his wife's illness which had lasted seven years. After luncheon he took with proud satisfaction a letter from a vase standing on the table and gave me to read 'a poem' by his son, deemed worthy of being read in public at the examination for the Cadet School. After obliging me with such marks of complete confidence, he adroitly passed to an indirect question about my case. This time I partly gratified his curiosity.

This mayor reminded me of the secretary of the district court of whom our friend Shtchepkin used to tell: 'Nine police-captains came and went, but the secretary remained unchanged, and went on managing the district as before. "How is it you get on with all of them?" Shtchepkin asked him. "Oh, it's nothing; with God's help we get round them somehow. Some certainly were hot-tempered at first, would stamp with their forelegs and their hindlegs, shout, swear for all they were worth, say they'd kick me out, and they'd report me to the governor—well, as you see, I know my place, one holds one's tongue and thinks; give him time, he'll be broken in! This is just first being in harness! And, as a matter of fact, they can be driven all right!'

When we reached Kazan the Volga was in all the glory of the spring floods. The whole distance from Uslon to Kazan we had to float on a punt, the river had overflowed for fifteen versts or more. It was a cloudy day. The ferry had broken down, a number of carts and conveyances of all sorts were waiting on the bank. The gendarme went to the station-superintendent and asked for a punt. The man gave it reluctantly, saying that

it would be better to wait, that it was not safe to cross. The gendarme was in a hurry because he was drunk and because he wanted to show his power.

They put my carriage on a little punt and we floated off. The weather seemed calmer. Half an hour later the Tatar put up a sail, when suddenly the storm began to rage again. We were carried along with such violence that, running upon a log, we crashed against it so that the wretched punt was broken and the water poured over the deck. The position was disagreeable; however, the Tatar succeeded in getting the punt on to a sandbank. A merchant's barge came into sight. We shouted to it and asked them to send a boat; the bargemen heard us and floated by without doing anything.

A peasant came up with his wife in a little canoe made out of a tree-trunk, asked us what was the matter, and, remarking 'Well, what of it? Stop up the hole and go your way rejoicing. What's there to mope about? It's because you are a Tatar, I suppose, you can't do anything,' climbed on to the punt.

The Tatar certainly was very much alarmed. First, when the water had poured over the sleeping gendarme, the latter had leapt up and at once began beating the Tatar. Secondly, the boat was government property, and the Tatar kept repeating: 'Here it will go to the bottom, what will become of me! what will become of me!'

I comforted him by saying that if it went to the bottom he would go with it.

'It is all right, master, if I drown, but how if I don't?'

The peasant and the others stopped up the hole with all sorts of things. The peasant struck it with his axe and knocked in some little plank; then, up to his waist in the water, helped to drag the punt off the sandbank and we were soon floating off into the channel of the

Volga. The river rushed us along savagely. The wind and the sleet cut the face, the cold penetrated to the bone, but soon the monument of Ivan the Terrible began to stand out from the fog and the floods of water. It seemed as though the danger were over, when suddenly the Tatar shouted in a plaintive voice, 'A leak, a leak!' and the water began pouring vigorously in at the hole that had been stuffed up. We were in the very centre of the river, the punt moved more and more slowly, one could foresee that it would soon sink altogether. The Tatar took off his cap and prayed. My valet, overcome with terror, wept and said: 'Farewell, mother, I shall not see you again.' The gendarme swore and vowed to thrash them all as soon as they got to the bank.

At first I too was frightened; besides, the wind and the rain added confusion and uproar. But the thought that it was absurd that I should perish without having *done anything*, that youthful '*Quid timeas, Caesarem vehis!*' got the upper hand and I calmly awaited the end, convinced that I could not perish between Uslon and Kazan. Later on, life breaks us of this proud confidence and punishes us for it; that is why youth is bold and full of heroism, while with the years a man grows cautious and is rarely carried away.

A quarter of an hour later, we were ashore near the walls of the Kazan Kremlin, drenched and shivering. I went into the nearest tavern, drank off a glass of foaming wine, ate a fried egg, and set off to the post-office.

In villages and little towns there is a room at the posting-station for travellers, in big towns every one puts up at hotels and there is nothing at the posting-stations for travellers. I was taken to the posting-station. The superintendent of the station showed me his room; there were women and children in it and a sick and bedridden old man; there was absolutely not a corner where I could change my clothes. I wrote a letter to the general of

gendarmes and asked him to assign a room to me somewhere that I might get warm and dry my clothes.

An hour later the gendarme returned and said that Count Apraxin had ordered that a room should be given me. I waited a couple of hours; no one came and I sent the gendarme off again. He came back with the answer that Colonel Pol, to whom the General had given the order to find me a room, was playing cards at the Nobles' Club and that a room could not be found me till next day.

This was barbarous; and I wrote a second letter to Count Apraxin asking him to send me on immediately, saying that I might find shelter at the next posting-station. The Count was graciously pleased to be in bed, and the letter was left until the morning. There was nothing for it. I took off my wet clothes and lay down on the table of the post-office wrapped in the greatcoat of the 'elder'; for a pillow I took a thick book and laid some linen upon it.

In the morning I sent out for some breakfast. The post-office officials were by now assembling. The clerk in charge submitted to me that it really was not the right thing to have breakfast in a public office, that it did not matter to him personally, but that the postmaster might not like it.

I answered him jocosely that a man cannot be turned out who has no right to go, and if he has no right to go he is obliged to eat and drink where he is detained. . . .

Next day Count Apraxin gave me permission to remain three days in Kazan and to put up at the hotel.

I spent those three days wandering about the town with the gendarme. The Tatar women with their covered faces, their broad-cheeked husbands, mosques of the true faith side by side with orthodox churches, all was suggestive of Asia and the East. In Vladimir,



in Nizhni there is a feeling of nearness to Moscow, here of remoteness from her.

In Perm I was taken straight to the governor. He was holding a great reception ; his daughter was being married that day to an officer. He insisted on my going in, and I had to present myself to the whole society of Perm in a dirty travelling coat, covered with mud and dust. The governor, after talking all sorts of nonsense, forbade me to make acquaintance with the Polish exiles and ordered me to come to him in a few days, saying that then he would find me work in the office.

This governor was a Little Russian ; he did not oppress the exiles, and altogether was a harmless person. He was improving his position somehow on the sly, like a mole working unseen underground ; he was adding grain to grain and laying by a little hourly for a rainy day.

From some inexplicable idea of discipline, he used to order all the exiles who lived in Perm to appear before him at ten o'clock in the morning on Saturdays. He would come out with his pipe and a list, verify whether we were all present, and, if any one was not, send a policeman to find out the reason and, after saying scarcely anything to any one, would dismiss us. In this way in his reception-room I became acquainted with all the Polish exiles, whose acquaintance he had warned me I must not make.

The day after my arrival the gendarme went away, and for the first time since my arrest I found myself in freedom.

In freedom . . . in a little town on the Siberian frontier, with no experience, with no conception of the surroundings in which I had to live.

From the nursery I had passed into the lecture-room, from the lecture-room to a circle of friends—it had all been theories, dreams, my own people, no practical

responsibilities. Then prison to let it all settle. Practical contact with life was beginning here near the Ural Mountains.

It began at once; the day after my arrival, I went with a porter from the governor's office to look for a lodging and he took me to a big house of one storey. In spite of my protesting that I was looking for a very little house or, still better, part of a house, he obstinately insisted on my going in.

The landlady made me sit down on her sofa and, learning that I came from Moscow, asked if I had seen Mr. Kabrit in Moscow. I told her that I had never even heard the name.

'How is that?' observed the old woman; 'I mean Kabrit,' and she mentioned his Christian name and his father's name. 'Upon my word, sir, why, he was our vice-governor!'

'But I have been nine months in prison, perhaps that is why I have not heard of him,' I said, smiling.

'Maybe that is it. So you will take the house, my good sir?'

'It is too big, much too big; I told the man so.'

'You can't have too much of a good thing,' she said.

'That is so, but you will want more rent for so much of a good thing.'

'Ah, my good sir, but who has talked to you about my price? I have not said a word about it yet.'

'But I know that such a house cannot be cheap.'

'How much will you give?'

To get rid of her, I said that I would not give more than three hundred and fifty roubles.

'Well, I would be thankful for that. Bid the man bring your bits of trunks, darling, and take a little glass of Teneriffe.'

Her price seemed to me fabulously low. I took the house, and, just as I was on the point of going, she stopped

me. 'I forgot to ask you, are you going to keep your own cow?'

'Good Heavens, no!' I answered, almost appalled by her question.

'Well, then, I will let you have cream.'

I went away thinking with horror where I was and what I was that I could be considered capable of keeping my own cow. But before I had time to look round, the governor informed me that I was transferred to Vyatka because another exile who had been allotted to Vyatka had asked to be transferred to Perm, where he had relations. The governor wanted me to leave the next day. This was impossible; thinking to remain some time in Perm, I had bought all sorts of things and I had to sell them even at half-price. After various evasive answers, the governor gave me permission to remain forty-eight hours, exacting a promise that I would not seek an opportunity of seeing the other exiles.

I was preparing to sell my horse and all sorts of rubbish the next day when suddenly the police-master appeared with an order to leave within twenty-four hours. I explained to him that the governor had given me an extension of time. The police-master showed me the instructions, in which he certainly was directed to see me off within twenty-four hours. The document had been signed that very day and, consequently, after the conversation with me.

'Ah,' said the police-master, 'I understand, I understand; our fine gentleman wants to throw the responsibility on me.'

'Let us go and confront him with it.'

'Let us!'

The governor said that he had forgotten the permission he had given me. The police-master asked slyly whether he wished him to make a fresh copy of the instructions.

'Is it worth while?' the governor remarked simply.

'We have caught him,' said the police-master, gleefully rubbing his hands, 'the scribbling soul!'

The Perm police-master belonged to a special type of military men turned into officials. They are men who have had the luck in the army to come in contact with a bayonet or to be hit by a bullet, and so to be given such posts as that of local police-master or executive clerk.

In the regiment they have acquired certain airs of frankness, have learnt by heart various phrases about the inviolability of honour and the noble feelings, and also sarcastic jeers at the 'scribbling gentry.' The younger among them have read Marlinsky<sup>1</sup> and Zagoskin,<sup>2</sup> know the beginning of the *Prisoner of the Caucasus* and *Voy-narovsky*, and often repeat verses. Some, for instance, will say every time they see a man smoking :

'The amber smoked between his lips.'

They are all without exception deeply and volubly conscious that their position is far inferior to their merits, that only poverty keeps them in this 'world of ink,' that if it were not for their wounds and lack of means, they would be commanding army corps or have the rank of adjutant-generals. Every one of them will quote a striking instance of some old comrade and say : 'Why, Kreits, or Ridiger, was made a cornet with me. We lodged together. Called each other Petrusha and Alyosha—but there, I'm not a German, you see, and I had no backing—so I can stay a policeman. Do you imagine it's easy for an honourable man with our ideas to do police work?'

<sup>1</sup> Marlinsky (pseudonym for Bestuzhev) (1795-1837), author of numerous tales, extremely romantic in style and subject. Readers of Turgenev will remember that he was the favourite author of the hero of *Knock, Knock, Knock*.

<sup>2</sup> Zagoskin (1789-1852), author of popular historical novels, sentimental and patriotic.—(*Translator's Notes*.)

Their wives are even louder in their complaints, and with heavy hearts go to Moscow every year to put money into the bank, on the pretext that a mother or aunt is ill and wants to see them for the last time.

And so they live in comfort for fifteen years. The husband, railing against his destiny, thrashes the police, beats the workpeople, cringes to the governor, screens thieves, steals legal documents, and repeats verses from the *Fountain of Bahtchisaray*.<sup>1</sup> The wife, complaining of destiny and provincial life, grabs everything she can get, takes tribute from petitioners and shops, and raves over moonlight nights.

I have made this digression because at first I was taken in by these gentry and believed they really were rather better than the rest, which is far from being the case. . . .

I brought away from Perm one personal memory which is dear to me.

At one of the governor's inspections of the exiles a Polish priest invited me to go and see him. I found several Poles there. One of them sat in silence pensively smoking a little pipe; misery, hopeless misery, was apparent on every feature of his face. He was round-shouldered, even crooked, his face was of the irregular Polish-Lithuanian type which at first surprises and then attracts. The greatest of the Poles, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, had just such features. The clothes of the Pole, whose name was Tsihanovitch, gave evidence of terrible poverty.

A few days later I was walking along the deserted boulevard with which Perm is bounded on one side; it was in the second half of May, the young leaves were opening, the birches were in flower (I remember the whole avenue was of birches), and there was no one anywhere. Our provincials are not fond of *platonick* walks. After

<sup>1</sup> The *Prisoner of the Caucasus*, *Voynarovsky*, and the *Fountain of Bahtchisaray* are poems of Pushkin's. The line quoted is from the last of the three.—(Translator's Note.)

strolling for some time, I saw at last on the other side of the boulevard, that is, where the open country began, a man botanising or perhaps simply gathering the scanty and monotonous flowers of that region. When he raised his head I recognised Tsihanovitch and went up to him.

Later on I saw a good deal of the victims of the Polish insurrection; their record is particularly rich in martyrs—Tsihanovitch was the first. When he told me how he had been persecuted by executioners in the uniform of adjutant-generals—those tools with which the brutality of the savage despot of the Winter Palace fights—then our discomforts, our prison, and our trial seemed to me paltry.

At that time in Vilna the commanding officer *on the side of the victorious enemy* was the celebrated renegade Muravyov, who immortalised himself by the historic declaration, ‘that he belonged to the Muravyovs who hanged and not the Muravyovs who are hanged.’ For Nicholas’ narrow, vindictive outlook, men of feverish ambition and coarse callousness were always the best fitted or, at any rate, the most sympathetic.

The generals who sat in the torture chamber and tormented the emissaries, their friends or the friends of their friends, behaved to the prisoners like blackguards, with no breeding, no feeling of delicacy, and at the same time were very well aware that all their doings were covered by the military coat of Nicholas, soaked in the blood of the Polish martyrs and the tears of Polish mothers. . . . This Passion Week of a whole people still awaits its Luke or its Matthew. . . . But let them know: one torturer after another will be shamed at the bar of history and leave his name there. That will be the portrait gallery of the period of Nicholas by way of pendant to the gallery of the generals of 1812.

Muravyov spoke to the prisoners as though they were of a lower class, and swore at them in the language of the

market. Once he was so carried away by fury that he went up to Tsihanovitch and would have taken him by the shoulder and perhaps have struck him, but met the fettered prisoner's eyes, was abashed, and went on in a different tone.

I guessed what those eyes must have looked like; when he told me the story three years after the event, his eyes glowed, the veins stood out on his forehead and on his bowed neck.

‘What could you have done in chains?’

‘I could have torn him to pieces with my teeth, I could have beaten him to death with my skull, with my chains,’ he said, trembling.

Tsihanovitch was sent at first to Verhoturye, one of the remotest towns of the province of Perm, lost in the Ural Mountains, buried in snow and so far from every road that in winter there was scarcely any means of communication. I need hardly say that living in Verhoturye was worse than in Omsk or Kransnoyarsk. Being in complete solitude, Tsihanovitch occupied himself with the study of natural science, collected the scanty flora of the Ural Mountains, and at last received permission to move to Perm; and this was a great amelioration of his lot. Again he heard the sound of his own language and met with comrades in misfortune. His wife, who had remained in Lithuania, wrote that she was setting off to *walk* to him from the province of Vilna.

When I was transferred so unexpectedly to Vyatka, I went to say good-bye to Tsihanovitch. The little room in which he lived was almost completely empty. A small, old trunk stood beside the meagre bed, a wooden table and a chair made up the rest of the furniture. It reminded me of my cell in the Krutitsky Barracks.

The news of my departure grieved him, but he was so used to disappointments that a minute later he said to me with a smile that was almost bright: ‘That’s just



what I love nature for ; wherever a man may be, she cannot be taken from him.'

I wanted to leave him something as a souvenir. I took a little stud out of my shirt and asked him to accept it.

'It won't suit my shirt, but I shall keep your stud to the end of my days and I will wear it at my funeral.'

Then he sank into thought and all at once began rapidly rummaging in his trunk. He found a little bag, from it drew out an iron chain made in a peculiar way, and, tearing several links off, gave them to me with the words : 'That chain is very precious to me, the most sacred memories of a certain time are connected with it. I do not give you all, but take these links. I never thought that I, an exile from Lithuania, would present them to a Russian exile.'

I embraced him and said good-bye.

'When are you going ?' he asked.

'To-morrow morning, but I will not invite you ; a gendarme is always sitting in my lodging.'

'And so a good journey to you ; may you be happier than I.'

At nine o'clock next morning the police-master turned up at my lodgings and began hurrying me off. The Perm gendarme, a far more manageable person than the Krutitsky one, was busy getting the carriage ready, not concealing his joy at the hope of being able to be drunk for three hundred and fifty versts. Everything was ready. I glanced casually into the street ; Tsihanovitch was passing, I rushed to the window.

'Well, thank God,' he said, 'this is the fourth time I have walked past to say good-bye to you, if only from a distance, and still you did not see me.'

With eyes full of tears I thanked him. This tender, womanly attention deeply touched me ; but for this meeting I should have had nothing to regret in Perm !

On the day after we left Perm there was a heavy,

unceasing downpour of rain from dawn, such as is common in forest districts; at two o'clock we reached a very poor village in the province of Vyatka. There was no house at the posting-station. Votyaks<sup>1</sup> (who could not read or write) performed the duties of overseer, looked through the permit for horses, saw whether there were two seals or one, shouted 'Aïda, aïda!' and harnessed the horses, I need hardly say, twice as quickly as it would have been done had there been a superintendent. I wanted to get dry and warm and to have something to eat. Before we reached the village, the Perm gendarme agreed to my suggestion that we should rest for a couple of hours. When I went into the stifling hut, without a chimney, and found that it was absolutely impossible to get anything, that there was not even a pot-house for five versts, I regretted our decision and was on the point of asking for horses.

While I was thinking whether to go on or not to go on, a soldier came in and reported that the officer at the étape had sent to invite me to a cup of tea.

'With the greatest pleasure. Where is your officer?'

'In the hut near by, your honour,' and the soldier made the familiar left-about-turn. I followed him.

A short, elderly officer with a face that bore traces of many anxieties, petty cares, and fear of his superiors, met me with all the genial hospitality of deadly boredom. He was one of those unintelligent, good-natured soldiers who work in the service for twenty-five years without promotion and without reasoning about it, as old horses serve, who probably suppose that it is their duty at dawn to put on their harness and drag something.

'Whom are you taking, and where?'

'Oh, don't ask, for it is heart-rending. Well, I suppose my superiors know all about it; it is our duty to carry

<sup>1</sup> The Votyaks are a Mongolian tribe, found in Siberia and Eastern Russia.—(*Translator's Note.*)

out orders and we are not responsible, but, looking at it as a man, it is an ugly business.'

'Why, what is it?'

'You see, they have collected a crowd of cursed little Jew boys of eight or nine years old. Whether they are taking them for the navy or what, I can't say. At first *the orders were to drive them to Perm, then there was a change and we are driving them to Kazan.* I have taken them over a hundred versts. The officer who handed them over said it was dreadful, and that's all about it; a third were left on the way' (and the officer pointed to the earth). 'Not half will reach their destination,' he added.

'Have there been epidemics, or what?' I asked, deeply moved.

'No, not epidemics, but they just die off like flies. A Jew boy, you know, is such a frail, weakly creature, like a skinned cat; he is not used to tramping in the mud for ten hours a day and eating dried bread—then again, being among strangers, no father nor mother nor petting; well, they cough and cough until they cough themselves into their graves. And I ask you, what use is it to them? What can they do with little boys?'

I made no answer.

'When do you set off?' I asked.

'Well, we ought to have gone long ago, but it has been raining so heavily. . . . Hey, you there! tell the small fry to form up.'

They brought the children and formed them into regular ranks: it was one of the most awful sights I have ever seen, those poor, poor children! Boys of twelve or thirteen might somehow have survived it, but little fellows of eight and ten. . . . No painting could reproduce the horror of that scene.

Pale, exhausted, with frightened faces, they stood in thick, clumsy, soldiers' overcoats, with stand-up collars,

fixing helpless, pitiful eyes on the garrison soldiers who were roughly getting them into ranks. The white lips, the blue rings under their eyes looked like fever or chill. And these sick children, without care or kindness, exposed to the icy wind that blows straight from the Arctic Ocean, were going to their graves.

And note that they were being taken by a kind-hearted officer who was obviously sorry for the children. What if they had been taken by a military political economist?

I took the officer's hand and, saying 'Take care of them,' rushed to my carriage. I wanted to sob and felt that I could not control myself.

What monstrous crimes are secretly buried in the archives of the infamous reign of Nicholas! We are used to them, they are committed every day, committed as though nothing were wrong, unnoticed, lost in the terrible distance, noiselessly sunk in the silent bogs of officialdom or shrouded by the censorship of the police.

Have we not seen with our own eyes seven hungry peasants from Pskov, who were being forcibly removed to the province of Tobolsk and were pitched without food or night's lodging in the Tverskoy Square in Moscow until Prince D. V. Golitsyn ordered them to be cared for at his own expense?

## Chapter 14

VIATKA—THE OFFICE AND DINING-ROOM OF HIS  
EXCELLENCY—K. Y. TYUFYAEV

THE Governor of Vyatka did not receive me, but sent word that I was to present myself next morning at ten.

I found in the room next morning the district police-captain, the police-master, and two officials : they were all standing talking in whispers and looking uneasily at the door. The door opened and there walked in a short, broad-shouldered old man with a head set on his shoulders like a bull-dog's, and with big jaws, which completed his resemblance to that animal and, moreover, wore a perpetual grin ; the elderly and at the same time satyr-like expression of his face, the quick little grey eyes, and the sparse, stiff hair made an incredibly disgusting impression.

To begin with, he gave the district police-captain a good dressing-down for the state of the roads on which he had driven the day before. The district police-captain stood with his head somewhat bowed in token of respect and submission, and replied to everything as servants used to do in old days, ' I obey, your Excellency.'

When he had done with the district police-captain, he turned to me. He looked at me insolently and asked :

' Did you finish your studies at the Moscow University ?'

' I took my degree.'

' And then served ?'

' In the Kremlin department.'

' Ha, ha, ha ! a fine sort of service ! Of course, you had plenty of time there for supper parties and singing songs. Alenitsyn !' he shouted.

A scrofulous-looking young man walked in.

' Here, my boy, here is a graduate of the Moscow

University. I expect he knows everything except his duties in the service; it is His Majesty's pleasure that he should learn them with us. Take him into your office and send me a special report on him. To-morrow you will come to the office at nine o'clock, and now you can go. But stay, I forgot to ask how you write.'

I did not understand for the moment.

'Come, your handwriting.'

'I have nothing with me.'

'Bring paper and pen,' and Alenitsyn handed me a pen.

'What am I to write?'

'What you like,' observed the secretary. Write, "On inquiry it appears——"'

'Well, you won't be corresponding with the Tsar,' the governor remarked, laughing ironically.

Before I left Perm I had heard a great deal about Tyufyaev, but he far surpassed all my expectations.

What does not Russian life produce!

Tyufyaev was born at Tobolsk. His father was possibly a convict and belonged to the poorest class of artisan. At thirteen, young Tyufyaev joined a troupe of travelling acrobats who wandered from fair to fair, dancing on the tight-rope, turning somersaults, and so on. With these he travelled from Tobolsk to the Polish provinces, entertaining the good Russian people. There, I do not know why, he was arrested, and as he had no passport he was treated as a vagrant, and sent on foot with a party of convicts back to Tobolsk. His mother was by then a widow and was living in great poverty. The son rebuilt the stove with his own hands when it was broken: he had to find some calling; the boy had learned to read and write, and he was engaged as a copying clerk in the local court.

Being naturally of a free-and-easy character and having developed his abilities by a many-sided education in the troupe of acrobats and the party of convicts with whom

he had passed from one end of Russia to the other, he became an energetic and practical man.

At the beginning of the reign of Alexander some sort of inspector came to Tobolsk. He needed capable clerks, and some one recommended Tyufyaev. The inspector was so well pleased with him that he proposed taking him along to Petersburg. Then Tyufyaev, whose ambition, to use his own words, had never risen above the post of secretary in a district court, formed a higher opinion of himself, and with iron will resolved to make his career.

And he did make it. Ten years later we find him the indefatigable secretary of Kankrin, who was at that time a general in the commissariat. A year later he was superintending a department in Araktcheyev's secretariat which superintended all Russia. He was with Araktcheyev in Paris at the time when it was occupied by the allied troops. Tyufyaev spent the whole time sitting in the secretariat of the expeditionary army and literally did not see one street in Paris. He sat day and night collating and copying papers with his worthy colleague, Kleinmihel.

Araktcheyev's secretariat was like those copper mines into which men are only sent to work for a few months, because if they remain longer they die. Even Tyufyaev was tired at last in that factory of orders and decrees, of regulations and commands, and began asking for a quieter post. Araktcheyev could not fail to like a man like Tyufyaev, a man free from higher pretensions, from all interests and opinions, formally honest, devoured by ambition, and regarding obedience as the foremost human virtue. Araktcheyev rewarded Tyufyaev with the post of deputy governor. A few years later he made him governor of the Perm Province. The province, through which Tyufyaev had once walked on a rope and once tied to a rope, lay at his feet.



A governor's power increases in direct ratio to his distance from Petersburg, but it increases in geometrical progression in the provinces where there are no nobility, as in Perm, Vyatka, and Siberia. Such a region was just what Tyufyaev wanted.

He was an Oriental satrap, only an active, restless one, meddling in everything and for ever busy. Tyufyaev would have been a ferocious Commissaire of the Convention in 1794, a Carrier.<sup>1</sup>

Dissolute in his life, coarse in nature, intolerant of the slightest contradiction, his influence was extremely pernicious. He did not take bribes, though he did make his fortune, as it appeared after his death. He was severe to his subordinates, he punished without mercy those who were detected in wrongdoing, yet his officials were more dishonest than anywhere. He carried the abuse of influence to an incredible point; for instance, when he sent an official to an inquiry he would (that is, if he were interested in the case) tell him that probably this or that would be discovered, and woe to the official if something else were discovered.

Perm was still full of the fame of Tyufyaev; there was a party of his adherents there, hostile to the new governor, who, of course, had surrounded himself with his own partisans.

On the other hand, there were people who hated him. One of them, a rather original product of the warping influences of Russian life, particularly warned me what Tyufyaev was like. I am speaking of a doctor in one of the factories. This doctor, whose name was Tchebotarev, an intelligent and very nervous man, had made an unfortunate marriage soon after he had completed his studies, then he was transferred to Ekaterinburg and

<sup>1</sup> Jean-Baptiste Carrier (1756-1794) was responsible for the *noyades* and massacre of 1600 people at Nantes, while suppressing the counter-revolutionary rising of La Vendée.—(Translator's Note.)

without any experience plunged into the bog of provincial life. Though placed in a fairly independent position in these surroundings, he yet was mastered by them; all his resistance took the form of sarcasms at the expense of the officials. He laughed at them to their faces, he said the most insulting things with grimaces and affectation. Since no one was spared, no one particularly resented the doctor's spiteful tongue. He made himself a social position by his attacks and forced a flabby set of people to put up with the lash with which he chastised them incessantly. I was warned that he was a good doctor, but crazy and extremely impertinent.

His gossip and jokes were neither coarse nor pointless; quite the contrary, they were full of humour and concentrated bitterness; it was his poetry, his revenge, his outcry of anger and, to some extent, perhaps, of despair. He had studied the circle of officials as an artist and as a doctor, and, encouraged by their cowardice and lack of resource, took any liberty he liked with them.

At every word he would add, 'It won't make a ha'p'orth of difference to you.'

Once in joke I remarked upon his repeating this.

'Why are you surprised?' the doctor replied. 'The object of everything that is said is to convince. I am in haste to add the strongest argument that exists. Convince a man that to kill his own father will not make a ha'p'orth of difference and he will kill him.'

Tchbotarev never refused to lend small sums of a hundred or two hundred roubles. When any one asked him for a loan, he would take out his notebook and inquire the exact date when the borrower would return the money.

'Now,' he would say, 'allow me to make a bet of a silver rouble that you won't repay it then.'

'Upon my soul,' the other would object, 'what do you take me for?'

‘It makes not a ha’p’orth of difference what I take you for,’ the doctor would answer, ‘but the fact is I have been keeping a record for six years, and not one person has paid me up to time yet, and hardly any one has repaid me later either.’

The day fixed would pass and the doctor would very gravely ask for the silver rouble he had won.

A spirit-tax contractor at Perm was selling a travelling coach. The doctor presented himself before him and made the following speech: ‘You have a coach to sell, I need it; you are a wealthy man, you are a millionaire, every one respects you for it and I have therefore come to pay you my respects also; as you are a wealthy man, it makes not a ha’p’orth of difference to you whether you sell the coach or not, while I need it very much and have very little money. You want to squeeze me, to take advantage of my necessity and ask fifteen hundred for the coach. I offer you seven hundred roubles. I shall be coming every day to bargain with you and in a week you will let me have it for seven-fifty or eight hundred; wouldn’t it be better to begin with that? I am ready to give it.’

‘Much better,’ answered the astonished spirit-tax contractor, and he let him have the coach.

Tchebotarev’s anecdotes and mischievous tricks were endless. I will add two more.

‘Do you believe in magnetism?’ a rather intelligent and cultured lady asked him in my presence.

‘What do you mean by magnetism?’

The lady talked some vague nonsense in reply.

‘It makes not a ha’p’orth of difference to you whether I believe in magnetism or not, but if you like I will tell you what I have seen in that way.’

‘Please do.’

‘Only listen attentively.’

After this he described in a very lively and interesting

way the experiments of a Harkov doctor, an acquaintance of his.

In the middle of the conversation, a servant brought some lunch in on a tray. As he was going out, the lady said to him, 'You have forgotten to bring the mustard.' Tchebotarev stopped. 'Go on, go on,' said the lady, a little scared already, 'I am listening.'

'Has he brought the salt?'

'So you are angry already,' said the lady, turning crimson.

'Not in the least. I assure you I know that you were listening attentively. Besides, I know that, however intelligent a woman is and whatever is being talked about, she can never rise above the kitchen—so how could I dare to be angry with you personally?'

At Countess Polier's factory he asked a lad, one of his patients there, to enter his service. The boy was willing, but the foreman said that he could not let him go without permission from the countess. Tchebotarev wrote to the lady. She told the foreman to let the lad have his passport on condition that the doctor paid five years' *obrok* in advance. The doctor promptly wrote to the countess that he agreed to her terms, but asked her as a preliminary to decide one point that troubled him, *i.e.* from whom could he recover the money if Encke's Comet should, intersecting the earth's orbit, turn it out of its course—which might occur a year and a half before the term fixed.

On the day of my departure for Vyatka the doctor appeared early in the morning and began with the following foolishness: 'Like Horace, once you sang, and to this day you are translated.'<sup>1</sup> Then he took out his notebook and asked if I would not like some money for the journey. I thanked him and refused.

<sup>1</sup> Pun on the Russian word for 'translate,' which also means 'transfer from place to place.'—(Translator's Note.)

‘Why won’t you take any? It won’t make a ha’p’orth of difference to you.’

‘I have money.’

‘That’s bad,’ he said; ‘the end of the world must be at hand.’ He opened his notebook and wrote down: ‘After fifteen years of practice I have for the first time met a man who won’t borrow, even though he is going away.’

Having finished playing the fool, he sat down on my bed and said gravely: ‘You are going to a terrible man. Be on your guard against him and keep as far away from him as you can. If he likes you it will be a poor recommendation; if he dislikes you, he will ruin you by slander, by calumny, and I don’t know what, but he will ruin you, and it won’t make a ha’p’orth of difference to him.’

With this he told me an incident the truth of which I had an opportunity of verifying afterwards from documents in the secretariat of the Minister of Home Affairs.

Tyufyaev carried on an open intrigue with the sister of a poor government clerk. The brother was made a laughing-stock and he tried to break off the liaison, threatened to report it to the authorities, tried to write to Petersburg—in fact, made such a to-do that on one occasion the police seized him and brought him before the provincial authorities to be certified as a lunatic.

The provincial authorities, the president of the court, and the inspector of the medical board, an old German who was very much liked by the working people and whom I knew personally, all found that Petrovsky, as the man was called, was mad.

Our doctor knew Petrovsky, who was a patient of his. He was asked as a matter of form. He told the inspector that Petrovsky was not mad at all, and that he proposed

that they should make a fresh inquiry into the case, otherwise he would have to pursue the matter further. The local authorities were not at all opposed to this, but unluckily Petrovsky died in the madhouse before the day fixed for the second inquiry, although he was a sturdy young fellow.

The report of the case reached Petersburg. Petrovsky's sister was arrested (why not Tyufyaev?) and a secret investigation began. Tyufyaev dictated the answers; he surpassed himself on this occasion. To hush it up at once and to ward off the danger of a second involuntary journey to Siberia, Tyufyaev instructed the girl to say that her brother had been on bad terms with her ever since, carried away by youth and inexperience, she had been seduced by the Emperor Alexander on his visit to Perm, for which she had received five thousand roubles through General Solomka.

Alexander's habits were such that there was nothing incredible in the story. To find out whether it was true was not easy, and in any case would have created a great deal of scandal. To Count Benckendorf's inquiry, General Solomka answered that so much money had passed through his hands that he could not remember the five thousand.

'*La regina ne aveva molto!*' says the Improvisatore in Pushkin's *Egyptian Nights*. . . .

So this estimable pupil of Araktcheyev's and worthy comrade of Kleinmihel's, acrobat, vagrant, copying clerk, secretary, and governor, this tender heart, and disinterested man who put the sane into a madhouse and did them to death there, the man who slandered the Emperor Alexander to divert the attention of the Emperor Nicholas, was now undertaking to train me in the service.

I was almost completely dependent upon him. He had only to write some nonsense to the minister and I

should have been sent off to some place in Irkutsk. No need to write, indeed he had the right to send me to any outlandish town, Kay or Tsarevo-Santchursk, without any discussion, without any formalities. Tyufyaev dispatched a young Pole to Glazov because the ladies preferred dancing the mazurka with him to dancing it with his Excellency.

In this way Prince Dolgoruky was transferred from Perm to Verhoturye. The latter place, lost in the mountains and the snows, is reckoned in the province of Perm, though it is as bad as Beryozov for climate and worse for desolation.

Prince Dolgoruky was one of the aristocratic scamps of the wrong sort such as are rarely met with in our day. He played all sorts of pranks in Petersburg, pranks in Moscow, and pranks in Paris.

His life was spent in this. He was an Izmailov on a small scale, a Prince E. Gruzinsky without his band of runaways at Lyskovo, that is, a spoilt, insolent, repulsive jester, a great gentleman and a great buffoon at once. When his doings went beyond all bounds, he was ordered to live in Perm.

He arrived in two carriages; in one he travelled with his dog, in the other, his French cook with his parrots. The people of Perm were delighted at the arrival of a wealthy visitor, and soon all the town was crowding into his dining-room. Dolgoruky got up an affair with a young lady at Perm; the latter, suspecting some infidelity, appeared unexpectedly at the prince's house one morning and found him with his housemaid. This led to a scene which ended in the faithless lover taking his riding-whip from the wall; the lady, seeing his intention, took to flight, he followed her, scantily attired in a dressing-gown; overtaking her in the little square in which the battalion were usually drilled, he gave the jealous lady three or four lashes with the whip



and calmly returned home as though he had done his duty.

Such charming pranks brought down upon him the censure of his Perm friends, and the authorities decided to send this mischievous urchin of forty to Verhoturye. On the eve of departure he gave a splendid dinner, and in spite of their differences the officials came to it. Dolgoruky promised to give them some wonderful pie for dinner.

The pie certainly was excellent and vanished with incredible rapidity. When nothing but scraps were left, Dolgoruky turned pathetically to his guests and said : ' Never let it be said that I grudged you anything at parting. I ordered my Gardi to be killed yesterday for the pie.'

The officials looked at one another in horror, and looked round them for the big Dane they knew so well ; he was not to be seen. The prince saw what they felt and bade the servant bring the rejected remnants of Gardi and his skin ; the rest of him was in the stomachs of the Perm officials. Half the town was ill with horror.

Meanwhile Dolgoruky, pleased at having had a joke at the expense of his friends, drove in triumph to Verhoturye. A third conveyance carried a whole poultry yard, a poultry yard travelling with post horses ! On the way he carried off the ledgers from several posting-stations, mixed them up, altered the entries and almost drove the posting superintendents out of their minds, for even with their books they did not find it easy to make their accounts balance.

The stifling emptiness and numbness of Russian life, strangely combined with the liveliness and even turbulence of the Russian character, develops every sort of eccentricity among us.

In Suvorov's habit of crowing like a cock, just as in Prince Dolgoruky's dog-pie, in the savage deeds of

Izmailov,<sup>1</sup> in the half-voluntary madness of Mamonov,<sup>2</sup> in the violent crimes of Tolstoy 'the American,' I detect a kindred note, familiar to us all, though weakened in us by education, or directed to some other end.

I knew Tolstoy personally and just at the date when he lost his daughter Sarra, an exceptional girl with marked poetic gifts. One glance at the old man's exterior, at his forehead covered with grey curls, at his sparkling eyes and athletic frame revealed how much energy and vigour nature had bestowed on him. He had developed only turbulent passions and evil propensities, and that is not surprising; everything vicious is allowed among us to develop for a long time without hindrance, while for humane passions a man is sent to a garrison or Siberia at the first step. . . . He rioted, gambled, fought, mutilated people and ruined families for twenty years on end, till at last he was sent to Siberia, from which he 'returned an Aleutian' as Griboyedov says, that is, he made his way through Kamtchatka to America, and thence obtained permission to return to Russia. Alexander pardoned him, and from the day after his arrival he carried on the same life as before. Married to a gipsy girl belonging to the Moscow camp and famous for her voice, he turned his house into a gambling den, spent all his time in orgies, all his nights at cards, and wild scenes of greed and drunkenness took place beside the cradle of the little Sarra. The story goes that on one occasion,

<sup>1</sup> In 1802, Alexander I. ordered a report to be sent him concerning the management by Major-General Izmailov of the latter's estates in Tula, where serfs were tortured and imprisoned by their owner on the slightest provocation. By the connivance of the local authorities, Izmailov was able to retain control and persist in his brutal practices till 1830. Even then he was only punished by being deprived of the management of his estates and interned in a small town. Both Izmailov and Tolstoy 'the American' are referred to in Griboyedov's famous play, *Woe from Wit*.

<sup>2</sup> Mamonov was one of the lovers of Catherine II., declared insane for having married against her wishes.—(*Translator's Notes*.)

to prove the nicety of his aim, he made his wife stand on the table and shot through the heel of her shoe.

His last prank almost sent him to Siberia again. He had long been angry with an artisan; he seized him in his house, bound him hand and foot, and pulled out one of his teeth. Will it be believed that this incident took place only ten or twelve years ago? The injured man lodged a complaint. Tolstoy bribed the police and the judge, and the man was put in prison for making a false accusation. At that time a well-known Russian literary man, N. F. Pavlov, was serving on the prison commission. The artisan told him his story, the inexperienced official took it up, Tolstoy was scared in earnest, the case was obviously going to end in his condemnation; but great is the God of Russia. Count Orlov wrote to Prince Shtcherbatov a secret report, in which he advised him to hush up the case, so as not to allow the *open triumph of a man of inferior rank over a member of the higher classes*. To Pavlov, Count Orlov gave the advice to resign his post. . . . This is almost more incredible than the extraction of the tooth. I was in Moscow at the time and knew the imprudent official well. But let us return to Vyatka.

The government office was incomparably worse than prison. Not that the actual work was great, but the stifling atmosphere, as of the Cave of Dogs, of that scene of corruption, and the terrible, stupid waste of time made the office insufferable. Alenitsyn did not worry me, he was, indeed, more polite than I expected; he had been at the Kazan High School and consequently had a respect for a graduate of the Moscow University.

There were some twenty clerks in the office. For the most part they were persons of no education and no moral conceptions; sons of clerks and secretaries, accustomed from their cradle to regard the service as a source of profit, and the peasants as soil that yielded

revenue, they sold their services, took twenty kopecks and quarter-roubles, cheated for a glass of wine, demeaned themselves and did all sorts of shabby things. My valet gave up going to the 'billiard room,' saying that the officials cheated there worse than anybody, and one could not give them a lesson because they were 'officers.' So with these people, whom my servant did not beat only on account of their rank, I had to sit every day from nine in the morning until two, and from five to eight in the evening.

Besides Alenitsyn, who was the head of the office, there was a head-clerk of the table at which I was put, who was also not a spiteful creature, though drunken and illiterate. At the same table sat four clerks. I had to talk to and become acquainted with these, and, indeed, with all the others, too. Apart from the fact that these people would have paid me out sooner or later for being 'proud' if I had not, it is simply impossible to spend several hours of every day with the same people without making their acquaintance. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that provincials make up to any one from outside and particularly to any one who comes from the capital, especially if there is some interesting story connected with him.

After spending the whole day in this bondage, I would sometimes come home with all my faculties in a state of stupefaction and fling myself on the sofa, worn out, humiliated, and incapable of any work or occupation. I heartily regretted my Krutitsky cell with its charcoal fumes and black-beetles, with a gendarme on guard and a lock on the door. There I had freedom, I did what I liked and no one interfered with me; instead of these vulgar sayings, dirty people, mean ideas and coarse feelings, there had been the stillness of death and unbroken leisure. And when I remembered that after dinner I had to go again, and again to-morrow, I was at times

overcome by fury and despair and tried to find comfort in drinking wine and vodka.

And then, to make things worse, one of my fellow-clerks would look in 'on his way' and relieve his boredom by staying on talking until it was time to go back to the office.

Within a few months, however, the position became somewhat easier.

Prolonged steady persecution is not in the Russian character unless a personal or mercenary element comes in; and that is not because the government does not want to stifle and crush a man, but is due to the Russian carelessness, to our *laissez-aller*. Russians in authority are as a rule ill-bred, coarse, and insolent; it is easy to provoke them to rudeness, but persistent oppression is not in their line, they have not enough patience for it, perhaps because it yields them no profit.

In the first heat to display, on the one hand, their zeal, on the other, their power, they do all sorts of stupid and unnecessary things, then, little by little, they leave a man in peace.

So it was with the office. The Ministry of Home Affairs had at that time a craze for statistics: it had given orders for committees to be formed everywhere, and had issued programmes which could hardly have been carried out even in Belgium or Switzerland; at the same time, all sorts of elaborate tables with maxima and minima, with averages and various deductions from the totals for periods of ten years (made up on evidence which had not been collected even a year beforehand!), with moral remarks and meteorological observations. Not a farthing was assigned for the expenses of the committees and the collection of evidence; all this was to be done from love for statistics through the rural police and put into proper shape in the government office. The clerks, overwhelmed with work, and the rural police, who hate all peaceful and

theoretical tasks, looked upon a statistics committee as a useless luxury, as a caprice of the ministry ; however, the reports had to be sent in with tabulated results and deductions.

This business seemed overwhelmingly difficult to the whole office ; it was simply impossible ; but no one troubled about that, all they worried about was that there should be no occasion for reprimands. I promised Alenitsyn to prepare a preface and introduction, and to draw up summaries of the tables with eloquent remarks introducing foreign words, quotations, and striking deductions, if he would allow me to undertake this very severe work not at the office but at home. Alenitsyn, after parleying with Tyufyaev, agreed.

The introduction to my record of the work of the committee, in which I discussed their hopes and their plans, for in reality nothing had been done at all, touched Alenitsyn to the depths of his soul. Tyufyaev himself thought it was written in masterly style. With that my labours in the statistical line ended, but they put the committee under my supervision. They no longer forced the hard labour of copying upon me, and the drunken head-clerk who had been my chief became almost my subordinate. Alenitsyn only insisted, from some consideration of propriety, that I should go every day for a short time to the office.

To show the complete impossibility of real statistics, I will quote the facts sent from the town of Kay. There, among various absurdities, were for instance the entries : Drowned—2. Causes of drowning not known—2, and in the column of totals these two figures were added together and the figure 4 was entered. Under the heading of extraordinary incidents occurred the following tragic anecdote : So-and-so, artisan, having deranged his intelligence by stimulating beverages, hanged himself. Under the heading of morality of the town's inhabitants

was the entry : ' There are no Jews in the town of Kay.' To the inquiry whether sums had been allotted for the building of a church, a stock exchange, or an almshouse, the answer ran thus : ' For the building of a stock exchange was assigned—nothing.'

The statistics that saved me from work at the office had the unfortunate consequence of bringing me into personal relations with Tyufyaev.

There was a time when I hated that man ; that time is long past and the man himself is past. He died on his Kazan estates about 1845. Now I think of him without anger, as of a peculiar wild beast met in a forest which ought to have been tamed, but with which one could not be angry for being a beast. At the time I could not help coming into conflict with him ; that was inevitable for any decent man. Chance helped me or he would have done me great injury ; to owe him a grudge for the harm he did not do me would be absurd and paltry.

Tyufyaev lived alone. His wife was separated from him. The governor's favourite, the wife of a cook who for no fault but being married to her had been sent away to the country, was, with an awkwardness which almost seemed intentional, kept out of sight in the back rooms of his house. She did not make her appearance officially, but officials who were particularly devoted to the governor—that is, particularly afraid of not being so—formed a sort of court about the cook's wife ' who was in favour.' Their wives and daughters paid her stealthy visits in the evening and did not boast of doing so. This lady was possessed of the same sort of tact as distinguished one of her brilliant predecessors—Potyomkin ; knowing the old man's disposition and afraid of being replaced, she herself sought out for him rivals that were not a danger to her. The grateful old man repaid this indulgent love with his devotion and they got on well together.



All the morning Tyufyaev worked and was in the office of the secretariat. The poetry of life only began at three o'clock. Dinner was for him no jesting matter. He liked a good dinner and he liked to eat it in company. Preparations were always made in his kitchen for twelve at table; if the guests were less than half that number he was mortified; if there were no more than two visitors he was wretched; if there was no one at all, he would go off on the verge of despair to dine in his *Dulcinea's* apartments. To procure people in order to feed them to repletion is not a difficult task, but his official position and the terror he inspired in his subordinates did not permit them freely to enjoy his hospitality, nor him to turn his house into a tavern. He had to confine himself to councillors, presidents (but with half of these he was on bad terms), rich merchants, spirit-tax contractors, and the few visitors to the town and 'oddities,' who were something in the style of the *capacités* whom Louis-Philippe wanted to introduce into elections. Of course I was an oddity of the first magnitude in Vyatka.

Persons exiled 'for their opinions' to remote towns are somewhat feared, but are never confounded with ordinary mortals. 'Dangerous people' have for provincials the same attraction that notorious Lovelaces have for women and courtesans for men. 'Dangerous people' are far more shunned by Petersburg officials and wealthy Moscow people than by provincials and especially by Siberians.

Those who were exiled in connection with the Fourteenth of December were looked upon with immense respect. The first visit on New Year's Day was paid by officials to the widow of Yushnevsky. The senator Tolstoy when taking a census of Siberia was guided by evidence received from the exiled Decembrists in checking the facts furnished by the officials.

Minih<sup>1</sup> from his tower in Pelymo superintended the affairs of the Tobolsk Province. Governors used to go to consult him about matters of importance.

The working people are still less hostile to exiles: they are always on the side of those who are punished. The word 'convict' disappears near the Siberian frontier and is replaced by the word 'unfortunate.' In the eyes of the Russian peasant legal sentence is no disgrace to a man. The peasants of the Perm Province, living along the main road to Tobolsk, often put out kvass, milk, and bread in a little window in case an 'unfortunate' should be secretly passing that way from Siberia.

By the way, speaking of exiles, Polish exiles begin to be met beyond Nizhni and their number rapidly increases after Kazan. In Perm there were forty, in Vyatka not less; there were besides several in every district town.

They lived quite apart from the Russians and avoided all contact with the inhabitants. There was great unity among them, and the rich shared with the poor like brothers.

I never saw signs of either hatred or special goodwill towards them on the part of the inhabitants. They looked upon them as outsiders—the more so, as scarcely a single Pole knew Russian.

One tough old Sarmatian, who had been an officer in the Uhlans under Poniatowski and had taken part in Napoleon's campaigns, received permission in 1837 to return to his Lithuanian domains. On the eve of his departure he invited me and several Poles to dinner. After dinner my cavalry officer came up to me, glass in hand, embraced me, and with a warrior's simplicity

<sup>1</sup> Minih was a minister and general prominent under Peter the Great and Anna. On the latter's death he brought about the downfall of Biron, was exiled by Elizabeth, and finally brought back from Siberia by Catherine.—(*Translator's Note.*)

whispered in my ear, 'Oh, why are you a Russian!' I did not answer a word, but this observation sank deeply into my heart. I realised that *this* generation could never set Poland free.

From the time of Konarski,<sup>1</sup> the Poles have come to look quite differently upon the Russians.

As a rule Polish exiles are not oppressed, but the position is awful for those who have no private means. The government gives those who have nothing *fifteen roubles a month*; with that they must pay for lodging, food, clothes, and fuel. In the bigger towns, in Kazan and Tobolsk, it is possible to earn something by giving lessons or concerts, playing at balls, drawing portraits and teaching dancing. In Perm and Vyatka they had no such resources. And in spite of that they would ask nothing from Russians.

Tyufyaev's invitations to his rich Siberian dinners were a real infliction to me. His dining-room was the same thing as the office only in another form, less dirty but more vulgar, because it had the appearance of free will and not of compulsion.

Tyufyaev knew his guests through and through, despised them, showed them his claws at times, and altogether treated them as a master treats his dogs, at one time with excessive familiarity, at another with a rudeness which was beyond all bounds—and yet he invited them to his dinners and they came to them in trembling and in joy, demeaning themselves, talking scandal, listening, trying to please, smiling, bowing.

I blushed for them and felt ashamed.

<sup>1</sup> Simon Konarski, a Polish revolutionary, also active in the 'Young Europe' (afterwards 'Young Italy') movement, lived in disguise and with a false passport in Poland, founding a printing press and carrying on active propaganda till he was caught and shot at Vilna in 1839. His admirers cut the post to which he was tied into bits which they preserved as relics of a saint.—(Translator's Note.)

Our friendship did not last long. Tyufyaev soon perceived that I was not fit for 'aristocratic' Vyatka society.

A few months later he was displeased with me, a few months later still he hated me, and I not only went no more to his dinners but even gave up going to him at all. The visit of the Tsarevitch saved me from his persecution, as we shall see later on.

I must note that I had done absolutely nothing to deserve first his attentions and invitations, and afterwards his anger and disapproval. He could not endure to see in me a man who behaved independently, though not in the least insolently; I was always *en règle* with him, and he demanded obsequiousness. He loved his power jealously. He had earned it and he exacted not only obedience but an appearance of absolute subordination. In this, unhappily, he was typically national.

A landowner says to his servant, 'Hold your tongue; I won't put up with your answering me!'

The head of a department observes, turning pale with anger, to a clerk who has made some criticism, 'You forget yourself; do you know to whom you are speaking?'

The Tsar sends men to Siberia 'for opinions,' buries them in dungeons for a poem—and all three of them are readier to forgive stealing and bribe-taking, murder and robbery, than the impudence of human dignity and the insolence of an independent word.

Tyufyaev was a true servant of the Tsar. He was thought highly of, but not highly enough. Byzantine servility was in him wonderfully combined with official discipline. Obliteration of self, renunciation of will and thought before authority went hand in hand with savage oppression of subordinates. He might have been a civilian Kleinmihel, his 'zeal' might in the same way have conquered everything, and he might in the same way have plastered the walls with the dead bodies of men,

have dried the palace with human lungs, and have thrashed the young men of the engineering corps even more severely for not being informers.

Tyufyaev had an intense secret hatred for everything aristocratic; he had gained it from bitter experience. The hard labour of Araktcheyev's secretariat had been his first refuge, his first deliverance. Till then his superiors had never offered him a chair, but had employed him on menial errands. When he served in the commissariat, the officers had persecuted him in military fashion and one colonel had horsewhipped him in the street in Vilna. . . . All this had entered into the copying clerk's soul and rankled there; now he was governor and it was his turn to oppress, to keep men standing, to address them familiarly, to shout at them, and sometimes to bring nobles of ancient lineage to trial.

From Perm, Tyufyaev had been transferred to Tver. The nobles of that province could not, for all their submissiveness and servility, put up with him. They petitioned the minister Bludov to remove him. Bludov transferred him to Vyatka.

There he was quite at home again. Officials and contractors, factory-owners and government clerks, a free hand with no one to interfere. . . . Every one trembled before him, every one remained standing in his presence, every one offered him drink and gave him dinners, every one waited on his slightest wish; at weddings and name-day parties, the first toast was 'To the health of his Excellency!'

## Chapter 15

OFFICIALS—SIBERIAN GOVERNORS-GENERAL—A RAPACIOUS  
POLICE-MASTER—AN ACCOMMODATING JUDGE—A ROASTED  
POLICE-CAPTAIN—A TATAR MISSIONARY—A BOY OF  
THE FEMALE SEX—THE POTATO TERROR, ETC.

ONE of the most melancholy results of the revolutionising of Russia by Peter the Great was the development of the official class. An artificial, hungry, and uncultivated class, capable of doing nothing but 'serving,' knowing nothing but official forms, it constitutes a kind of civilian clergy, officiating in the courts and the police forces, and sucking the blood of the people with thousands of greedy and unclean mouths.

Gogol lifted one corner of the curtain and showed us Russian officialdom in all its ugliness ; but Gogol cannot help conciliating by his laughter ; his immense comic talent gets the upper hand of his indignation. Moreover, in the fetters of the Russian censorship, he could scarcely touch upon the melancholy side of that foul underworld, in which the destinies of the unhappy Russian people are forged.

There, somewhere in grimy offices, from which we make haste to get away, shabby men write and write on grey paper, and copy on to stamped paper—and persons, families, whole villages are outraged, terrified, ruined. A father is sent into exile, a mother to prison, a son for a soldier, and all this breaks like a thunderclap upon them, unexpected, for the most part undeserved. And for the sake of what ? For the sake of money. A tribute must be paid . . . or an inquiry will be held concerning some dead drunkard, burnt up by spirits and frozen to death. And the head-man collects and the village elder collects, the peasants bring their last kopeck. The police-inspector must live ; the police-captain must live and keep his wife too ; the councillor

must live and educate his children, the councillor is an exemplary father.

Officialdom reigns supreme in the north-east provinces of Russia and in Siberia. There it flourishes unhindered, unsupervised . . . it is so terribly far off, every one shares in the profits, stealing becomes *res publica*. Even the cannon-shots of the Imperial power cannot destroy these foul, boggy trenches hidden under the snow. All the measures of government are weakened, all its intentions are distorted; it is deceived, fooled, betrayed, sold, and all under cover of loyal servility and with the observance of all the official forms.

Speransky<sup>1</sup> tried to ameliorate the lot of the Siberian people. He introduced everywhere the collegiate principle, as though it made any difference whether the officials stole individually or in gangs. He discharged the old rogues by hundreds and engaged new ones by hundreds. At first he inspired such terror in the rural police that they actually bribed the peasants not to make complaints against them. Three years later the officials were making their fortunes by the new forms as well as they had done by the old.

Another eccentric individual was General Velyaminov. For two years he struggled at Tobolsk trying to check abuses, but, seeing the hopelessness of it, threw it all up and quite gave up attending to business.

Others, more judicious, did not make the attempt, but got rich themselves and let others get rich.

'I will abolish bribe-taking,' said Senyavin, the Governor of Moscow, to a grey-headed peasant who had lodged a complaint against some obvious injustice. The old man smiled.

<sup>1</sup> Speransky, a leading statesman of the early period of the reign of Alexander I., banished in 1812 on a trumped-up charge of treason, recalled by Nicholas. He was responsible for the codification of Russian laws. See Tolstoy's *War and Peace* for sketch of him.—(Translator's Note.)



‘What are you laughing at?’ asked Senyavin.

‘Why, you must forgive me, sir,’ answered the peasant; ‘it put me in mind of one fine young fellow who boasted he would lift a cannon, and he really did try, but he did not lift it for all that.’

Senyavin, who told the story himself, belonged to that class of unpractical men in the Russian service who imagine that rhetorical sallies on the subject of honesty and despotic persecution of two or three rogues can remedy so universal a disease as Russian bribe-taking, which grows freely under the shadow of the censorship.

There are only two remedies for it, publicity, and an entirely different organisation of the whole machinery, the introduction again of the popular elements of the arbitration courts, verbal proceedings, sworn witnesses, and all that the Petersburg administration detests.

Pestel, the Governor-General of Western Siberia, father of the celebrated Pestel put to death by Nicholas, was a real Roman proconsul and one of the most violent. He carried on an open system of plunder in the whole region which was cut off by his spies from Russia. Not a single letter crossed the border without the seal being broken, and woe to the man who should dare to write anything about his rule. He kept merchants of the first guild for a year at a time in prison in chains; he tortured them. He sent officials to the borders of Eastern Siberia and left them there for two or three years.

For a long time the people bore it; at last an artisan of Tobolsk made up his mind to bring the position of affairs to the knowledge of the Tsar. Afraid of the ordinary routes, he went to Kyahta and from there made his way with a caravan of tea across the Siberian frontier. He found an opportunity at Tsarskoe-Syelo of giving Alexander his petition, beseeching him to read it. Alexander was amazed and impressed by the terrible things he read in it. He sent for the man, and after a

long talk with him was convinced of the melancholy truth of his report. Mortified and somewhat embarrassed, he said to him: 'You can go home now, my friend; the thing shall be inquired into.'

'Your Majesty,' answered the man, 'I will not go home now. Better command me to be put in prison. My conversation with your Majesty will not remain a secret and I shall be killed.'

Alexander shuddered and said, turning to Miloradovitch, who was at that time Governor-General in Petersburg:

'You will answer to me for him.'

'In that case,' observed Miloradovitch, 'allow me to take him into my own house.' And the man actually remained there until the case was ended.

Pestel almost always lived in Petersburg. You may remember that the proconsuls as a rule lived in Rome. By means of his presence and connections, and still more by the division of the spoils, he avoided all sorts of unpleasant rumours and scandals.<sup>1</sup>

The Imperial Council took advantage of Alexander's temporary absence at Verona or Aachen to come to the intelligent and just decision that since the matter related to Siberia the case should be handed to Pestel to deal with, as he was on the spot. Miloradovitch, Mordvinov, and two others were opposed to this decision, and the case was brought before the Senate.

The Senate, with that outrageous injustice with which it continually judges cases relating to the higher officials, exonerated Pestel but exiled Treskin, the civilian governor of Tobolsk, and deprived him of his grade and rank. Pestel was only relieved of his duty.

<sup>1</sup> This gave Count Rastoptchin occasion for a biting jest at Pestel's expense. They were both dining with the Tsar. The Tsar, who was standing at the window, asked: 'What's that on the church, the black thing on the cross?' 'I can't distinguish,' observed Count Rastoptchin. 'You must ask Boris Ivanovitch, he has wonderful eyes, he sees from here what is being done in Siberia.'

After Pestel, Kaptsevitch, a man of the school of Araktcheyev, was sent to Tobolsk. Thin, bilious, a tyrant by nature and a tyrant because he had spent his whole life in the army, a man of restless activity, he brought external discipline and order into everything, fixed maximum prices for goods, but left everyday affairs in the hands of robbers. In 1824 the Tsar wanted to visit Tobolsk. Through the Perm provinces runs an excellent broad high-road, which has been in use for ages and is probably good owing to the nature of the soil. Kaptsevitch made a similar road to Tobolsk in a few months. In the spring, in the time of alternate thaw and frost, he forced thousands of workmen to make the road by levies from villages near and far; epidemics broke out among them, half the workmen died, but 'zeal can accomplish everything'—the road was made.

Eastern Siberia is still more slackly governed. It is so far away that news scarcely reaches Petersburg. Bronevsky, the Governor-General in Irkutsk, was fond of firing cannon-balls into the town when 'he was merry.' And another high official used when he was drunk to perform a service in his house in full vestments and in the presence of the chief priest. Anyway the noisiness of the one and the devoutness of the other were not so pernicious as Pestel's blockade and Kaptsevitch's ceaseless activity.

It is a pity that Siberia is so badly governed. The choice of its governors-general has been particularly unfortunate. I do not know what Muravyov is like; he is celebrated for his intelligence and ability; the others were good for nothing. Siberia has a great future; it is looked upon merely as a cellar, in which there are great stores of gold, of fur, and other goods, but which is cold, buried in snow, poor in the means of life, without roads or population. That is not true.

The dead hand of the Russian government, that does

everything by violence, everything with the stick, cannot give the living impetus which would carry Siberia forward with American rapidity. We shall see what will happen when the mouths of the Amur are opened for navigation and America meets Siberia near China.

I said long ago that the *Pacific Ocean is the Mediterranean of the future*.<sup>1</sup> In that future the part played by Siberia, the land that lies between the ocean, Southern Asia, and Russia, will be extremely important. Of course Siberia is bound to extend to the Chinese frontier. People cannot freeze and shiver in Beryozov and Yakutsk when there are Krasnoyarsk, Minusinsk, and other such places.

Even the Russian immigration into Siberia has elements in its nature that suggest a different development. Generally speaking, the Siberian race is healthy, well-grown, intelligent, and extremely practical. The Siberian children of settlers know nothing of the land-owners' power. There is no noble class in Siberia and at the same time there is no aristocracy in the towns; the officials and the officers, who are the representatives of authority, are more like a hostile garrison stationed there by a victorious enemy than an aristocracy. The immense distances save the peasants from frequent contact with them; money saves the merchants, who in Siberia despise the officials and, though outwardly giving way to them, take them for what they are—their clerks employed in civil affairs.

The habit of using firearms, inevitable for a Siberian, is universal. The dangers and emergencies of his daily life have made the Siberian peasant more warlike, more resourceful, readier to offer resistance than the Great Russian. The remoteness of churches leaves his mind freer from superstition than in Russia, he is cold to religion

<sup>1</sup> I see with great pleasure that the New York papers have several times repeated this.

and most often a dissenter. There are remote villages which the priest visits only three or four times a year and then christens, buries, marries, and hears confessions wholesale.

On this side of the Ural Mountains things are done more discreetly, and yet I could fill volumes with anecdotes of the abuse of power and the roguery of the officials, heard in the course of my service in the office and dining-room of the governor.

‘Well, he was a master at it, my predecessor,’ the police-master of Vyatka said to me in a moment of confidential conversation. ‘Well, of course, that’s the way to get on, only you have got to be born to it; he was a regular Seslavin,<sup>1</sup> a Figner in his own way, I may say,’ and the eyes of the lame major, promoted to be a police-master for his wounds, sparkled at the memory of his glorious predecessor.

‘A gang of robbers turned up not far from the town, and once or twice news reached the authorities of merchants’ goods being stolen, or money being seized from a contractor’s steward. The governor was in a great taking and wrote off one order after another. Well, you know the rural police are cowards; they are equal to binding a wretched little thief and bringing him to justice—but this was a gang and maybe with guns. The rural police did nothing. The governor sends for the police-master and says: “I know that it is not your duty, but your efficiency makes me turn to you.”’

‘The police-master had information about the business beforehand. “General,” said he, “I will set off in an hour, the robbers must be at this place and that place; I’ll take soldiers with me, I shall find them at this place and that place, and within a few days I shall bring them in chains to the prison.” Why, it was like Suvorov with

<sup>1</sup> Seslavin was a famous leader of the guerilla warfare against Napoleon in 1812.—(*Translator’s Note.*)

the Austrian Emperor ! And indeed, no sooner said than done—he fairly pounced on them with the soldiers, they had no time to hide their money, the police-master took it all and brought the robbers to the town.

‘The police inquiry began. The police-master asked them : “Where is your money ?”

“Why, we gave it to you, sir, into your very hands,” answered two of the robbers.

“Gave it to me ?” says the police-master in amazement.

“Yes, to you, to you,” shout the robbers.

“What insolence !” says the police-master to the inspector, turning pale with indignation. “Why, you scoundrels, you ’ll be saying next, I suppose, that I stole it with you. I ’ll teach you to insult my uniform ; I ’m a cornet of Uhlans and won’t allow a slur on my honour !”

‘He has them flogged, saying “Confess where you have hidden the money.” At first they stick to their story, only when he gives the order for them to have a second pipeful, the ringleader shouts : “We are guilty, we spent the money.”

“You should have said so long ago,” said the police-master, “instead of talking such nonsense ; you won’t take me in, my man.”

“Well, to be sure, we ought to come to your honour for a lesson and not you to us. We couldn’t teach you anything !” muttered the old robber, looking with admiration at the police-master.

‘And do you know he got the Vladimir ribbon for that business.’

‘Excuse me,’ I asked, interrupting the praises of the great police-master, ‘what is the meaning of “a second pipeful” ?’

‘That ’s just a saying among us. It ’s a dreary business you know, flogging, so as you order it to begin, you light your pipe and it is usually over by the time you have

smoked it—but in exceptional cases we sometimes order our friends to be treated to two pipefuls. 'The police are used to it, they know pretty well how much to give.'

Of the Figner above mentioned, there were regular legends current in Vyatka. He performed miracles. Once, I do not remember the occasion, some general-adjutant or minister arrived, and the police-master wanted to show that he did not wear the Uhlan cross for nothing and that he could spur his horse as smartly as any one. To this end he applied to one of the Mashkovtsevs, rich merchants of that region, asking him to give him his valuable grey saddle-horse. Mashkovtsev would not give it.

'Very good,' said Figner, 'you won't do such a trifle for me of your own accord, so I'll take the horse without your permission.'

'Well, we shall see about that,' said Gold.

'Yes, we shall see,' said Steel.<sup>1</sup>

Mashkovtsev locked up the horse and put two men on guard, and on that occasion the police-master was unsuccessful.

But in the night, as though of design, an empty barn belonging to spirit-tax contractors, and adjoining the Mashkovtsevs' house, took fire. The police-master and the police did their work admirably; to save Mashkovtsev's house, they even pulled down the wall of his stable and carried off the horse in dispute without a hair of his tail or of his mane singed. Two hours later, the police-master, parading on a white stallion, went to receive the thanks of the highest authority for his exemplary management of the fire. After this no one doubted that the police-master could do anything.

The governor Ryhlevsky was driving from an assembly ;

<sup>1</sup> An epigram of Pushkin's contains the two lines :—

"'I'll buy all," said Gold.

"'I'll take all," said Steel.'—(*Translator's Note.*)



at the moment when his carriage was starting, the driver of a small sledge carelessly got between the traces of the back pair and the front pair of horses; this led to a minute's confusion, which did not, however, prevent Ryhlevsky from reaching home perfectly comfortably. Next day the governor asked the police-master if he knew whose coachman it was who had driven into his traces, and said that he ought to be reprimanded.

'That coachman, your Excellency, will never drive into your traces again; I gave him a good lesson,' the police-master answered, smiling.

'But whose man is he?'

'Councillor Kulakov's, your Excellency.'

At that moment the old councillor, whom I found and left councillor of the provincial government, walked into the governor's.

'You must forgive us,' said the governor to him, 'for having given your coachman a lesson.'

The astonished councillor looked at him inquiringly, unable to understand.

'You see he drove into my traces yesterday. You see if he is allowed to . . .'

'But, your Excellency, I was at home all day yesterday, and my wife too, and the coachman was at home.'

'What's the meaning of this?' asked the governor.

'I am very sorry, your Excellency. I was so busy yesterday, my head was in a whirl, I quite forgot about the coachman, and I confess I did not dare to report that to your Excellency. I meant to see about him at once.'

'Well, you are a regular police-master, there is no doubt about it!' observed Ryhlevsky.

Side by side with this rapacious official, I will describe another of the opposite breed—a tame, soft, sympathetic official.

Among my acquaintances was one venerable old man,

a police-captain dismissed from his position by a Committee of Inquiry instituted by the Senators' revision. He spent his time drawing up petitions and getting up cases, which was just what he was forbidden to do. This man, who had been in the service immemorial ages, had stolen, doctored official documents, and collected false evidence in three provinces, twice been tried, and so on. This veteran of the rural police liked to tell amazing anecdotes about himself and his colleagues, not concealing his contempt for the degenerate officials of the younger generation.

'They're giddy-pates,' he said; 'of course they take what they can get, there is no living without it, but it is no use looking for cleverness or knowledge of the law in them. I'll tell you, for instance, about one friend of mine. He was a judge for twenty years and only died last year. He was a man of brains! And the peasants don't remember evil against him, though he has left his family a bit of bread. He had quite a special way of his own. If a peasant came along with a petition, the judge would admit him at once and be as friendly and pleasant as you please.

'“What is your name, uncle, and what was your father's?”

'The peasant would bow and say, “Yermolay, sir, and my father was called Grigory.”

'“Well, good health to you, Yermolay Grigoryevitch, from what parts is the Lord bringing you here?”

'“We are from Dubilovo.”

'“I know, I know. You have a mill, I fancy, on the right from the track.”

'“Yes, sir, the mill of our commune.”

'“A well-to-do village; the land is good, black soil.”

'“We don't complain against God, kind sir.”

'“Well, that is as it should be. I'll be bound you have a good-sized family, Yermolay Grigoryevitch?”

“ “ Three sons and two daughters, and I have married the elder to a young fellow who has been with us five years.”

“ “ I daresay you have grandchildren by now ? ”

“ “ Yes, there are little ones, your honour.”

“ “ And thank God for it ! increase and multiply. Well, Yermolay Grigoryevitch, it is a long way you have come, let us have a glass of birch wine.”

“ The peasant makes a show of refusing. The judge fills a glass for him, saying, “ Nonsense, nonsense, my man, the holy Fathers have nothing against wine and oil to-day.”

“ “ It ’s true there is nothing against it, but wine brings a man to every trouble.” Then he crosses himself, bows, and drinks the birch wine.

“ “ With such a family, Grigoryevitch, I ’ll be bound life is hard ? To feed and clothe every one of them you can’t manage with one wretched nag or cow ; there would not be milk enough.”

“ “ Upon my word, sir, what could I do with only one horse ? I have three, I did have a fourth, a roan, but it was bewitched about St. Peter’s fast ; the carpenter in our village, Dorofey, may God be his judge, hates to see another man well off and has an evil eye.”

“ “ It does happen, it does happen. And you have big grazing lands, of course ; I ’ll be bound you keep sheep ? ”

“ “ To be sure, we have sheep too.”

“ “ Ah, I ’ve been too long talking with you. It’s the Tsar’s service, Yermolay Grigoryevitch, it is time I was in the Court. Had you come about some little business or what ? ”

“ “ Yes, your honour.”

“ “ Well, what is it ? some quarrel ? Make haste and tell me, old man ! it is time I was going.”

“ “ Well, kind sir, trouble has come upon me in my

old age. Just at Assumption, we were in the tavern and came to high words with a peasant of a neighbouring village, such a mischievous man, he is always stealing our wood. We had hardly said a word before he swung his fist and gave me a punch in the chest. 'Keep your blows for your own village,' I said to him, and just to make an example, I would have given him a push, but, being drunk perhaps, or else it was the devil in it, hit him in the eye—and, well, I spoilt his eye, and he is gone with the church elder straight to the inspector—wants to have me up to be tried in the court."

'While he tells this story, the judge—our Petersburg actors are nothing to him—grows graver and graver, makes his eyes look dreadful, and does not say a word.

'The peasant sees and turns pale, lays his hat at his feet and takes out a towel to mop his face. The judge still sits silent and turns over the leaves of a book.

"So I have come here to you, kind sir," says the peasant in a changed tone.

"What can I do in the matter? What a position! And what did you hit him in the eye for?"

"That's true indeed, sir, what for . . . The evil one confounded me."

"It's a pity! a great pity! to think that a household must be ruined! Why, what will become of the family without you, all young people and little grandchildren, and I am sorry for your old woman, too."

'The peasant's legs begin to tremble.

"Well, kind sir, what have I brought on myself?"

"Look here, Yermolay Grigoryevitch, read for yourself . . . or perhaps you are no great reader? Well, here is the article on maiming and mutilation . . . to be punished by flogging and exile to Siberia."

"Don't let a man be ruined! Don't destroy a Christian! Cannot something be done? . . ."

"What a fellow! Can we go against the law?"

Of course, it is all in human hands. Well, instead of thirty strokes we might give five."

"But about Siberia? . . ."

"That's not in our power to decide, my good man."

The peasant pulls out of his bosom a little bag, takes out of the bag a bit of paper, out of the paper two and then three gold pieces, and with a low bow lays them on the table.

"What's this, Yermolay Grigoryevitch?"

"Save me, kind sir."

"Nonsense, nonsense, what do you mean? Sinful man that I am, I do sometimes accept a token of gratitude. My salary is small, so one is forced to, but if one accepts it, it must be for something! How can I help you? It would be a different thing if it were a rib or a tooth, but a blow on the eye! Take your money back."

The peasant is crushed.

"I'll tell you what; shall I talk to my colleagues and write to the governor's office? Very likely the case will come into the courts of justice, there I have friends, they can do anything, only they are a different sort of people, you won't get off for three gold pieces there."

The peasant begins to recover his faculties.

"You needn't give me anything. I am sorry for your family, but it is no use your offering them less than two grey notes."

"But, kind sir, as God is above, I don't know where I am to turn to get such a mint of money—four hundred roubles—these are hard times."

"Yes, I expect it is difficult. We could diminish the punishment in view of your penitence, and taking into consideration that you were not sober . . . and, there, you know people get on all right in Siberia. There is no telling how far you may have to go. . . . Of course, if you were to sell a couple of horses and one of the cows, and the sheep, you might make it up. But it would

take you a time to make up that money again ! On the other hand, if you do keep the horses, you 'll have to go off yourself to the ends of the earth. Think it over, Grigoryevitch ; there is no hurry, we can wait till to-morrow, but it is time I was going," adds the judge, and puts the gold pieces he had refused into his pocket, saying, " This is quite unnecessary. I only take it not to offend you."

' Next morning you may be sure the old screw brings three hundred and fifty roubles in all sorts of old-fashioned coins to the judge.

' The judge promises to look after his interests: the peasant is tried and tried and properly scared and then let off with some light punishment, or with a warning to be careful in future, or with a note that he is to be kept under police supervision, and he remembers the judge in his prayers for the rest of his life.

' That 's how they used to do in old days,' the discharged police-inspector told me ; ' they did things properly.'

The peasants of Vyatka are, generally speaking, not very long-suffering, and for that reason the officials consider them fractious and troublesome. The rural police find their real gold mine in the Votyaks, the Mordvaks, and the Tchuvashes ; they are pitiful, timid, dull-witted people. Police-inspectors pay double to the governor for appointments in districts populated by these Finnish tribes.

The police and the officials do incredible things with these poor creatures.

If a land-surveyor crosses a Votyak village on some commission, he invariably halts in it, takes an astrolabe out of his cart, sticks a post into the ground and stretches a chain. Within an hour the whole village is in a turmoil. ' The surveyors, the surveyors ! ' the peasants say with the horror with which in 1812 they used to

say, 'The French, the French!' The village elder comes with the commune to do homage. And the surveyor measures everything and writes it down. The elder entreats him not to measure, not to do them injury. The surveyor demands twenty or thirty roubles. The Votyaks are greatly relieved, they collect the money—and the surveyor goes on to the next Votyak village.

If a dead body comes into the hands of the police, they take it about with them for a fortnight, if it is frosty weather, from one Votyak village to another, and in each one declare that they have just picked it up, and that an inquest and inquiry will be held in their village. The Votyaks buy them off.

A few years before I came to the district, a police-inspector who had acquired a taste for taking bribes brought a dead body into a big Russian village and demanded, I remember, two hundred roubles. The village elder called the commune together. The commune refused to give more than a hundred. The police official would not give way. The peasants lost their tempers and shut him with his two clerks in the hut which serves as the parish office, and in their turn threatened to burn them. The police-inspector did not believe in the threat. The peasants surrounded the hut with straw and, as an ultimatum, passed a hundred-rouble note in at the window on a stake. The heroic police-inspector still insisted on another hundred. Then the peasants set fire to the straw all round the hut and the three Mucius Scaevolus of the rural police were burnt to death. This affair was afterwards brought before the senate.

The Votyak villages are as a rule much poorer than the Russian ones.

'You live poorly, brother,' I said to a Votyak while I was waiting for horses in a stuffy, smoky little hut all on the slant with its windows looking into the back-yard.



'Can't be helped, master! We are poor, we save money for bad times.'

'Well, it would be hard for times to be worse, old man,' I said to him, pouring out a glass of rum. 'Drink, and forget your troubles.'

'We do not drink,' answered the Votyak, looking eagerly at the glass and suspiciously at me.

'Nonsense! come, take it.'

'Drink yourself first.'

I drank and then the Votyak drank.

'And what are you?' he asked. 'From the government on business?'

'No,' I answered, 'on a journey; I am going to Vyatka.'

This considerably reassured him and, looking round carefully, he added by way of explanation, 'it is a black day when the police-inspector and the priest come to us.'

I should like to add something concerning the latter. Our priests are being more and more transformed into clerical police, as might indeed be expected from the Byzantine meekness of our Church and the spiritual supremacy of the Tsar.

The Finnish tribes were partly christened before the time of Peter the Great and partly in the reign of Elizabeth, while a section of them have remained heathen. The greater number of those christened in the reign of Elizabeth secretly adhere to their savage, gloomy religion.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> All their prayers may be reduced to a petition for the continuance of their race, for their crops, and the preservation of their herds.

'May Yumala grant that from one sheep may be born two, from one grain may come five, that my children may have children.'

There is something miserable and gloomy, the survival from ancient times of oppression, in this lack of confidence in life on earth, and daily bread. The devil (Shaitan) is regarded as equal to God. I saw a terrible fire in a village, in which the inhabitants were mixed Russian and Votyak. The Russians were hard at work shouting and dragging out their things, the tavern-keeper was particularly

Every two or three years the police-inspector or the rural police superintendent go through the villages accompanied by a priest, to discover which of the Votyaks have confessed and been absolved, and which have not and why not. They are oppressed, thrown into prison, flogged, and made to pay fines; and, above all, the priest and the police-inspector search for any proof that they have not given up their old rites. Then the spiritual spy and the police missionary raise a storm, exact an immense bribe, give them a 'black day,' and so depart leaving everything as before, to repeat their procession with cross and rods a year or two later.

In 1835 the Most Holy Synod thought it fitting to do apostolic work in the Vyatka Province and convert the Tcheremiss heathen to orthodoxy.

This conversion is a type of all the great reforms carried out by the Russian government, a façade, scene-painting, *blague*, deception, a magnificent report, while somebody steals and some one else is flogged.

The Metropolitan, Filaret, sent an energetic priest as a missionary. His name was Kurbanovsky. Consumed by the Russian disease of ambition, Kurbanovsky threw himself warmly into the work. He determined at all costs to force the grace of God upon the Tcheremisses. At first he tried preaching, but he soon got tired of that. And, indeed, does one make much way by that old method?

The Tcheremisses, seeing the position of affairs, sent to him their priests, wild, fanatical and adroit. After a prolonged parleying, they said to Kurbanovsky: 'In the forest are white birch-trees, tall pines and firs, there is also the little juniper. God suffers them all and bids not the juniper be a pine-tree. And so are we among conspicuous among them. It was impossible to check the fire, but it was easy at first to save things. The Votyaks were huddled together on a little hill, weeping copiously and doing nothing.

ourselves, like the forest. Be ye the white birch, we will remain the juniper; we will not trouble you, *we will pray for the Tsar*, will pay the taxes and send recruits, but we will not change our holy things.’<sup>1</sup>

Kurbanovsky saw that there was no making them hear reason, and that the success of Cyril and Methodius<sup>2</sup> would not be vouchsafed him, and he appealed to the local police-captain. The latter was highly delighted. He had long been eager to display his devotion to the Church. He was an unbaptized Tatar, *i.e.* a Mahomedan of the true faith, by name Devlet-Kildejev.

The police-captain took a band of soldiers and set off to attack the Tcheremisses with the Word of God. Several villages were duly christened. The apostle Kurbanovsky performed the thanksgiving service and went meekly off to receive his reward. To the Tatar apostle the government sent the Vladimir Cross for the propagation of Christianity!

Unfortunately, the Tatar missionary was not on good terms with the mullah at Malmyzho. The mullah was not at all pleased that a son of the true faith of the Koran should preach the Gospel so successfully. In Ramadan, the police-captain, heedlessly affixing the cross to his button, appeared at the mosque and of course took up his stand before all the rest. The mullah had only just begun reading the Koran through his nose, when all at once he stopped, and said that he dare not continue in the presence of a Mussulman who had come into the mosque wearing a Christian emblem.

<sup>1</sup> A similar reply (if Kurbanovsky did not invent this one) was made by peasants in Germany when refusing to be converted to Catholicism.

<sup>2</sup> Cyril and Methodius were brothers who in the ninth century evangelised in Thrace, Moesia and Moravia, invented the Slav alphabet, and made a Slav translation of the Bible. They are saints of both the Greek and the Catholic Churches.—(*Translator's Note.*)

The 'Tatars raised a murmur, the police-captain was overcome with confusion and either withdrew or removed the cross.

I afterwards read in the *Journal of the Ministry of Home Affairs* about the brilliant conversion of the Tcheremisses. The article referred to the zealous co-operation of Devlet-Kildejev. Unluckily they forgot to add that his zeal for the Church was the more disinterested as his faith in Islam was so firm.

Before the end of my time at Vyatka, the Department of Crown Property was stealing so impudently that a commission of inquiry was appointed, which sent inspectors about the province. With that began the introduction of new regulations concerning Crown peasants.

Governor Kornilov had the appointment of the officials for this inspection in his hands. I was one of those appointed. What things it was my lot to read! Melancholy, and amusing, and disgusting. The very headings of the cases moved me to amazement.

'Relating to the disappearance of the house of the Parish Council, no one knows where, and of the gnawing of the plan of it by mice.'

'Relating to the loss of twenty-two government quit-rent articles, *i.e.* of fifteen versts of land.'

'Relating to the re-enumeration of the peasant boy Vassily among the feminine sex.' This last was so strange that I at once read the case from cover to cover.

The father of this supposed Vassily wrote in his petition to the governor that fifteen years ago he had a daughter born, whom he had wanted to call Vassilisa, but that the priest, being 'in liquor,' christened the girl Vassily and so entered it on the register. The circumstance apparently troubled the peasant very little. But when he realised that it would soon come to his family

to furnish a recruit and pay the poll tax, he reported on the matter to the mayor and the rural police superintendent. The case seemed very suspicious to the police. They had previously refused to listen to the peasant, saying that he had let ten years pass. The peasant went to the governor, the latter arranged a solemn examination of the boy of the feminine sex by a doctor and a midwife. . . . At this point a correspondence suddenly sprang up with the Consistory, and the priest, the successor of the one who, when 'in liquor,' had failed to note this trifling difference, appeared on the scene, and the case went on for years and the girl was left under suspicion of being a man until the end.

Do not imagine that this is an absurd figment of my fancy; not at all, it is quite in harmony with the spirit of the Russian autocracy.

In the reign of Paul some colonel of the Guards in his monthly report entered an officer as dead who was dying in the hospital. Paul struck him off the list as dead. Unluckily the officer did not die, but recovered. The colonel persuaded him to withdraw to his country estate for a year or two, hoping to find an opportunity to rectify the error. The officer agreed, but unfortunately for the colonel the heirs who had read of their kinsman's death in the *Army Gazette* refused on any consideration to acknowledge that he was living, and, inconsolable at their loss, insisted on bringing the matter before the authorities. When the living corpse saw that he was likely to die a second time, not merely on paper but from hunger, he went to Petersburg and sent in a petition to Paul. The Tsar wrote with his own hand on the petition: 'Forasmuch as a decree of the Most High has been promulgated concerning this gentleman, the petition must be refused.'

This is even better than my Vassilisa-Vassily. Of what consequence was the crude fact of life beside the

decree of the Most High? Paul was the poet and dialectician of autocracy!

Foul and loathsome as this morass of officialdom is, I must add a few words more about it. To bring it into the light of day is the least poor tribute one can pay to those who have suffered and perished, unknown and uncomforted.

The government readily gives the higher officials waste lands by way of reward. There is no great harm in that, though it would be more sensible to keep these reserves to provide for the increase of population. The regulations that govern the fixing of the boundaries of these lands are fairly detailed; forests containing building timber, the banks of navigable rivers, indeed the banks of any river, must not be given away, nor under any circumstances may lands be so assigned that are being cultivated by peasants, even though the peasants have no right to the land except that of long usage.<sup>1</sup>

All these restrictions of course are only on paper. In reality the assignment of land to private owners is a terrible source of plunder and oppression of the peasants. Great noblemen in receipt of rents used either to sell their rights to merchants, or try through the provincial authorities to gain some special privilege contrary to the regulations. Even Count Orlov himself was *by chance* assigned a main road and the pasture lands on which cattle droves are pastured in the Province of Saratov.

It is therefore no wonder that one fine morning the peasants of the Darovsky parish in Kotelnitchesky district had their lands cut off right up to their barns and houses

<sup>1</sup> In the Province of Vyatka the peasants are particularly fond of forming new settlements. Very often three or four clearings are suddenly discovered in the forest. The immense waste lands and forests (now half cut down) tempt the peasants to take this *res nullius* which is left unused. The Minister of Finance has several times been obliged to confirm these squatters in possession of the land,

and given as private property to some merchants who had bought the lease of them from a kinsman of Count Kankrin. The merchants fixed a rent for the land. This led to a lawsuit. The Court of Justice, bribed by the merchants and afraid of Kankrin's kinsman, confused the issues of the case. But the peasants were determined to persist with it. They elected two hard-headed peasants from amongst themselves and sent them to Petersburg. The case was brought before the Senate. The land-surveying department perceived that the peasants were in the right and consulted Kankrin. The latter simply admitted that the land had been irregularly apportioned, but urged that it would be difficult to restore it, because it *might* have changed hands since then, and that its present owners *might* have made various improvements. And therefore his Excellency proposed that, considering the vast amount of Crown property available, the peasants should be assigned a full equivalent in a different part. This satisfied every one except the peasants. In the first place, it is no light matter to bring fresh land under cultivation, and, in the second, the fresh land turned out to be swampy and unsuitable. As the peasants were more interested in growing corn than in shooting grouse and woodcock, they sent another petition.

Then the Court of Justice and the Ministry of Finance made a new case out of the old one, and finding a law which authorised them, if the land that was assigned turned out to be unsuitable, to add as much as another half of the amount to it, ordered the peasants to be given another half swamp in addition to the swamp they already had.

The peasants sent another petition to the Senate, but, before their case had come up for investigation, the land-surveying department sent them plans of their new land, with the boundaries marked and coloured, with stars for the points of the compass and appropriate explanations



for the lozenges, marked R.R.Z., and the lozenges marked Z.Z.R., and, what was of more consequence, a demand for so much rent per acre. The peasants, seeing that far from giving them land, they were trying to squeeze money out of them for the bog, refused point-blank to pay. The police-captain reported it to Tyufyaev, who sent a punitive expedition under the command of the Vyatka police-master. The latter arrived, seized a few persons, flogged them, restored order in the district, took the money, handed over the *guilty parties* to the Criminal Court, and was hoarse for a week afterwards from shouting. Several men were punished with the lash and sent into exile.

Two years later the Tsarevitch passed through the district, the peasants handed him a petition; he ordered the case to be investigated. It was upon this that I had to draw up a report. Whether any good came of this re-investigation I do not know. I have heard that the exiles were brought back, but whether the land was restored I cannot say.

In conclusion, I must mention the celebrated story of the potato mutiny and how Nicholas tried to bring the blessings of Petersburg civilisation to the nomad gypsies.

Like the peasantry of all Europe at one time, the Russian peasants were not very ready to plant potatoes, as though an instinct told the people that this was a poor kind of food which would give them neither health nor strength. However, on the estates of decent landowners and in many crown villages, 'earth apples' had been planted long before the Potato Terror. But anything that is done of itself is distasteful to the Russian Government. Everything must be done under terror of the stick and the drill-sergeant, to the beating of drums.

The peasants of the Kazan and of part of the Vyatka province planted potatoes in their fields. When the potatoes were lifted, the idea occurred to the Ministry to

set up a central potato-pit in each *volost*. Potato-pits were ratified, potato-pits were prescribed, potato-pits were dug; and at the beginning of winter the peasants, much against their will, took the potatoes to the central pit. But when the following spring the authorities tried to make them plant frozen potatoes, they refused. There cannot, indeed, be a more flagrant insult to labour than a command to do something obviously absurd. This refusal was represented as a mutiny. The Minister Kisselyov sent an official from Petersburg; he, being an intelligent and practical man, exacted a rouble apiece from the peasants of the first *volost* and allowed them not to plant frozen potatoes.

He repeated this proceeding in the second *volost* and the third, but in the fourth, the elder told him point-blank that he would neither plant the potatoes nor pay him anything. 'You have let off these and those,' he told the official; 'it's clear you must let us off too.' The official would have concluded the business with threats and thrashings, but the peasants snatched up stakes and drove away the police; the military governor sent Cossacks. The neighbouring *volosts* took the peasants' part.

It is enough to say that it came to using grape-shot and bullets. The peasants left their homes and dispersed into the woods; the Cossacks drove them out of the bushes like game; then they were caught, put into irons, and sent to be court-martialled at Kosmodemiansk.

By a strange accident the old major in charge there was an honest, good-natured man; in the simplicity of his heart, he said that the official sent from Petersburg was solely to blame. Every one pounced upon him, his voice was hushed up, he was suppressed; he was intimidated and even put to shame for 'trying to ruin an innocent man.'

And the inquiry followed the usual Russian routine;

the peasants were flogged during the examination, flogged as a punishment, flogged as an example, flogged to extort money, and a whole crowd of them sent to Siberia.

It is worth noting that Kisselyov passed through Kosmodemiansk during the inquiry. He might, it may be thought, have looked in at the court-martial or have sent for the major.

He did not do so!

The famous Turgot, seeing the hatred of the peasants for the potatoes, distributed seed-potatoes among contractors, purveyors, and other persons under government control, sternly forbidding them to give them to the peasants. At the same time he gave them secret orders not to prevent the peasants from stealing them. In a few years a large part of France was under potatoes.

*Tout bien pris*, is not that better than grape-shot, Pavel Dmitrievitch?

In 1836 a gypsy camp came to Vyatka and settled in a field. These gypsies had wandered as far as Tobolsk and Irbit and had invariably, accompanied by their trained bear and entirely untrained children, led their free nomadic existence from time immemorial, engaged in horse-doctoring, fortune-telling, and petty pilfering. They peacefully sang songs and robbed hen-roosts, but all at once the governor received instructions from the Most High that if gypsies were found without passports (not a single gypsy had ever had a passport, and that Nicholas and his men knew perfectly well) they were to be given a fixed time within which they were to inscribe themselves as citizens of the village or town where they happened to be at the date of the decree.

At the expiration of the time limit, it was ordained that those fit for military service should be taken for soldiers and the rest sent into exile, all but the children of the male sex.

This senseless decree, which recalled biblical accounts

of the persecution and punishment of whole races and the slaughter of all the males among them, disconcerted even Tyufyaev. He communicated the absurd decree to the gypsies and wrote to Petersburg that it could not be carried out. To inscribe themselves as citizens they would need both money for the officials and the consent of the town or village, which would also have been unwilling to accept the gypsies for nothing. It was necessary, too, that the gypsies should themselves have been desirous of settling on the spot. Taking all this into consideration, Tyufyaev—and one must give him credit for it—asked the Ministry to grant postponements and exemptions.

The Ministry answered by instructions that at the expiration of the time-limit this Nebuchadnezzar-like decree should be carried out. Most unwillingly Tyufyaev sent a company of soldiers with orders to surround the gypsy camp; as soon as this was done, the police arrived with the garrison battalion, and what happened, I am told, was beyond all imagination. Women with streaming hair ran about in a frenzy, screaming and weeping, and falling at the feet of the police; grey-headed old mothers clung to their sons. But order triumphed and the police-master took the boys and took the recruits—while the rest were sent by *étape* somewhere into exile.

But when the children had been taken, the question arose what was to be done with them and at whose expense they were to be kept.

In old days there were foundling hospitals in connection with the Department of Public Charity which cost the government nothing. But the Prussian chastity of Nicholas abolished them as detrimental to morals. Tyufyaev advanced money of his own and asked the Minister for instructions. Ministers never stick at anything. They ordered that the boys, until further

instructions, were to be put into the charge of the old men and women maintained in the almshouses.

Think of placing little children in charge of moribund old men and women, making them breathe the atmosphere of death—forcing old people who need peace and quiet to look after children for nothing!

What imagination!

While I am on the subject I must describe what happened some eighteen months later to the elder of my father's village in the province of Vladimir. He was a peasant of intelligence and experience who carried on the trade of a carrier, had several teams of three horses each, and had been for twenty years the elder of a little village that paid *obrok* to my father.

Some time during the year I spent in Vladimir, the neighbouring peasants asked him to deliver a recruit for them. Bringing the future defender of his country on a rope, he arrived in the town with great self-confidence as a man proficient in the business.

'This,' said he, combing with his fingers the fair, grizzled beard that framed his face, 'is all the work of men's hands, sir. Last year we pitched on our lad, such a wretched sickly fellow he was—the peasants were much afraid he wouldn't do. "And how much, good Christians, will you go to? A wheel will not turn without being greased." We talked it over and the *mir* decided to give twenty-five gold pieces. I went to the town and after talking in the government office I went straight to the president—he was a sensible man, sir, and had known me a long time. He told them to take me into his study and he had something the matter with his leg, so he was lying on the sofa. I put it all before him and he answered me with a laugh, "that's all right, that's all right, you tell me how many of *them* you have brought—you are a skinflint, I know you." I put ten gold pieces on the table and made him a low bow—he took the money

in his hand and kept playing with it. "But I say," he said, "I am not the only one whom you will have to pay, what more have you brought?" "Another ten," I told him. "Well," he said, "you can reckon yourself what you must do with it. Two to the doctor, two to the army receiver, then the clerk, and all sorts of other little tips won't come to more than three—so you had better leave the rest with me and I will try to arrange it all."

'Well, did you give it to him?'

'To be sure I did—and they took the boy all right.'

Accustomed to such reckonings and calculations and also, perhaps, to the five gold pieces of which he had given no account, the elder was confident of success. But there may be many mishaps between the bribe and the hand that takes it. Count Essen, one of the Imperial adjutants, was sent to Vladimir for the levy of recruits. The elder approached him with his gold pieces. Unfortunately the Count had, like the heroine of Pushkin's *Nulin*, been reared 'not in the traditions of his fathers,' but in the school of the Baltic aristocracy, which instils German devotion to the Russian Tsar. Essen was angered, shouted at him and, what was worse, rang the bell; the clerk ran in and gendarmes made their appearance. The elder, who had never suspected the existence of men in uniform who would not take bribes, lost his head so completely that he did not deny the charge, did not vow and swear that he had never offered money, did not protest, might God strike him blind and might another drop never pass between his lips, if he had thought of such a thing! He let himself be caught like a sheep and led off to the police station, probably regretting that he had offered the general too little and so offended him.

But Essen, not satisfied with the purity of his own conscience, nor the terror of the luckless peasant, and probably wishing to eradicate bribery in *Russland*, to

punish vice and set a salutary example, wrote to the police, wrote to the governor, wrote to the recruiting office of the elder's criminal attempt. The peasant was put in prison and committed for trial. Thanks to the stupid and grotesque law which metes out the same punishment to the honest man who gives a bribe to an official and to the official himself who takes the bribe, things looked black for him and the elder had to be saved at all costs.

I rushed to the governor ; he refused to intervene in the matter ; the president and councillors of the Criminal Court shook their heads, panic-stricken at the interference of the Imperial adjutant. The latter himself, relenting, was the first to declare that he ' wished the man no harm, that he only wanted to give him a lesson, that he ought *to be tried and then let off.*' When I told this to the police-master, he observed : ' The fact is, none of these gentry know how things are done, he should have simply sent him to me. I would have given the fool a good drubbing—to teach him to mind what he is about—and would have sent him about his business. Every one would have been satisfied, and now you are in a nice mess with the Criminal Court.'

These two comments express the Russian conception of law so neatly and strikingly that I cannot forget them.

Between these pillars of Hercules of the national jurisprudence, the elder had fallen into the deepest gulf, that is, into the Criminal Court. A few months later the verdict was prepared that the elder after being punished with the lash should be exiled to Siberia. His son and all his family came to me, imploring me to save their father, the head of the family. I myself felt fearfully sorry for the peasant, ruined though perfectly innocent. I went again to the president and the councillors, pointing out to them that they were doing themselves harm by punishing the elder so severely ; that they knew them-



selves very well that no business was ever done without bribes ; that, in fact, they would have nothing to eat if they did not, like true Christians, consider that every gift is perfect and every giving is a blessing. Entreating, bowing, and sending the elder's son to bow still lower, I succeeded in gaining half of my object. The elder was condemned to a few strokes of the lash within prison walls, was allowed to remain in his home, but was forbidden to act as an agent for the other peasants.

I sighed with relief when I saw that the governor and the prosecutor had agreed to this, and went to the police to ask for some mitigation of the severity of the flogging ; the police, partly because they were flattered at my coming myself to ask them a favour, partly through compassion for a man who was suffering for something that concerned them all so intimately, promised me to make it a pure formality.

A few days later the elder appeared, thinner and greyer than before. I saw that for all his delight he was sad about something and weighed down by some oppressive thought.

'What are you worrying about ?' I asked him.

'Well, I wish they 'd settle it once for all.'

'I don't understand.'

'I mean, when will they punish me ?'

'Why, haven't they punished you ?'

'No.'

'Then how is it they have let you go ? You are going home, aren't you ?'

'Home, yes ; but I fancy the secretary read something about punishment.'

I could really make nothing of it, and at last asked him whether they had given him any sort of paper. He gave it me. The whole verdict was written in it, and at the end it was stated that, having received the punishment of the lash within the prison walls in accordance with the

sentence of the Criminal Court, he was given his certificate and let out of prison.

I laughed.

‘Well, you have been flogged already, then!’

‘No, sir, I haven’t.’

‘Well, if you are dissatisfied, go back and ask them to punish you; perhaps the police will enter into your position.’

Seeing that I was laughing, the old man smiled too, shaking his head dubiously and adding: ‘Well, well, strange doings!’

‘How irregular!’ many people will say; but they must remember that it is only through such irregularity that life is possible in Russia.

## Chapter 16

ALEXANDER LAVRENTYEVITCH VITBERG

**A**MONG the grotesque and dirty, petty and loathsome scenes and figures, affairs and cases, in this setting of official routine and red-tape, I recall the noble and melancholy features of an artist, who was crushed by the government with cold and callous cruelty.

The leaden hand of the Tsar did not merely strangle a work of genius in its infancy, did not merely destroy the very creation of the artist, entangling him in judicial snares and police traps, but tried to snatch from him his honourable name together with his last crust of bread and to brand him as a taker of bribes and a pilferer of government funds.

After ruining and disgracing A. L. Vitberg, Nicholas exiled him to Vyatka. It was there that we met.

For two years and a half I lived with the great artist and saw the strong man, who had fallen a victim to the autocracy of red-tape officialdom and barrack-discipline, which measures everything in the world by the footrule of the recruiting officer and the copying clerk, breaking down under the weight of persecution and misery.

It cannot be said that he succumbed easily; he struggled desperately for full ten years. He came into exile still hoping to confound his enemies and justify himself, he came in fact still ready for conflict, bringing plans and projects. But he soon discerned that all was over.

Perhaps even this discovery would not have overwhelmed him, but he had at his side a wife and children and ahead of him years of exile, poverty, and privation; and Vitberg was turning grey, growing old, growing old not by days but by hours. When I left him in Vyatka at the end of two years he was quite ten years older.

Here is the story of this long martyrdom.

The Emperor Alexander did not believe in his victory over Napoleon, he was oppressed by the fame of it and genuinely gave the glory to God. Always disposed to mysticism and melancholy, in which many people saw the fretting of conscience, he gave way to it particularly after the series of victories over Napoleon.

When 'the last soldier of the enemy had crossed the frontier,' Alexander issued a proclamation in which he vowed to raise in Moscow an immense temple to the Saviour. Plans for such a temple were invited, and an immense competition began.

Vitberg was at that time a young artist who had just completed his studies and gained the gold medal for painting. A Swede by origin, he was born in Russia and at first was educated in the Engineers' Cadet Corps. The artist was enthusiastic, eccentric, and given to mysticism: he read the proclamation, read the appeal for plans, and flung aside all other pursuits. For days and nights he wandered about the streets of Petersburg, tortured by a persistent idea; it was too strong for him, he locked himself up in his own room, took a pencil and set to work.

To no one in the world did the artist confide his design. After some months of work, he went to Moscow to study the city and the surrounding country and set to work again, shutting himself up for months together and keeping his design a secret.

The date of the competition arrived. The plans were numerous, there were designs from Italy and from Germany and our Academicians sent in theirs. And the unknown youth sent in his among the rest. Weeks passed before the Emperor examined the plans. These were the forty days in the wilderness, days of temptation, doubt, and agonising suspense.

Vitberg's colossal design, filled with religious poetry, impressed Alexander. He came to a stop before it, and

it was the first of which he inquired the authorship. They broke open the sealed envelope and found the unknown name of an Academy pupil.

Alexander wanted to see Vitberg. He had a long talk with the artist. His bold and fervent language, his genuine inspiration and the mystic tinge of his convictions impressed the Emperor. 'You speak in stones,' he observed, examining Vitberg's design again.

That very day his design was accepted and Vitberg was chosen to be the architect and the director of the building committee. Alexander did not know that with the laurel wreath he was putting a crown of thorns on the artist's head.

There is no art more akin to mysticism than architecture; abstract, geometrical, mutely musical, passionless, it lives in symbol, in emblem, in suggestion. Simple lines, their harmonious combination, rhythm, numerical relations, make up something mysterious and at the same time incomplete. The building, the temple, is not its own object, as is a statue or a picture, a poem, or a symphony; a building requires an inmate; it is a place mapped and cleared for habitation, an environment, the shield of the tortoise, the shell of the mollusc; and the whole point of it is that the receptacle should correspond with its spirit, its object, its inmate, as the shell does with the tortoise. The walls of the temple, its vaults and columns, its portal and facade, its foundations and its cupola must bear the imprint of the divinity that dwells within it, just as the convolutions of the brain are imprinted on the bone of the skull.

The Egyptian temples were their holy books. The obelisks were sermons on the high-road. Solomon's temple was the Bible turned into architecture; just as St. Peter's at Rome is the architectural symbol of the escape from Catholicism, of the beginning of the lay world, of the beginning of the secularisation of mankind.

The very building of temples was so invariably accompanied by mystic rites, symbolical utterances, mysterious consecrations that the mediæval builders looked upon themselves as something apart, a kind of priesthood, the heirs of the builders of Solomon's temple, and made up secret guilds of stonemasons, which afterwards passed into Freemasonry.

From the time of the Renaissance architecture loses its peculiar mystic character. The Christian faith is struggling with philosophic doubt, the Gothic arch with the Greek pediment, spiritual holiness with worldly beauty. What gives St. Peter's its lofty significance is that in its colossal proportions Christianity struggles towards life, the church becomes pagan and on the walls of the Sistine Chapel Michael Angelo paints Jesus Christ as a broad-shouldered athlete, a Hercules in the flower of his age and strength.

After St. Peter's, church architecture deteriorated completely and was reduced at last to simple repetition, on a larger or smaller scale, of the ancient Greek peripteras and of St. Peter's.

One Parthenon is called St. Madeleine's in Paris ; the other is the Exchange in New York.

Without faith and without special circumstances, it was hard to create anything living : there is something of artificiality, of hypocrisy, of anachronism, about all new churches, such as the five-domed cruet-stands with onions instead of corks in them in the Indo-Byzantine manner, which Nicholas builds; with Ton for architect, or the angular Gothic churches offensive to the aristocratic eye, with which the English decorate their towns.

But the circumstances under which Vitberg created his design, his personality, and the state of mind of the Emperor were all exceptional.

The war of 1812 had caused a violent upheaval in men's minds in Russia ; it was long after the deliverance

of Moscow before the ferment of thought and nervous irritation could subside. Events outside Russia, the taking of Paris, the story of the Hundred Days, the suspense, the rumours, Waterloo, Napoleon sailing over the ocean, the mourning for fallen kinsmen, the apprehension over the living, the returning troops, the soldiers going home, all produced a great effect even on the coarsest natures. Imagine a youthful artist, a mystic, gifted with creative force and at the same time a fanatic, under the influence of all that had happened, under the influence of the Tsar's appeal and his own genius.

Near Moscow, between the Mozhaïsk and Kaluga roads, there is a slight eminence which rises above the whole city. These are the Sparrow Hills of which I have spoken in my first reminiscences of childhood. The city lies stretched at their foot, and one of the most picturesque views of Moscow is from their top. Here Ivan the Terrible, at that time a young profligate, stood weeping and watching his capital burn; here the priest Sylvester appeared before him and with stern words transformed that monster of genius for twenty years.

Napoleon with his army skirted this hill, here his strength was broken, it was at the foot of the Sparrow Hills that his retreat began.

Could a better spot be found for a temple to commemorate the year 1812 than the furthest point which the enemy reached?

But this was not enough, the hill itself was to be turned into the lower part of the temple; the open ground down to the river was to be encircled by a colonnade, and on this base, built on three sides by nature itself, a second and a third temple were to be raised, making up a marvellous whole.

Vitberg's temple, like the chief dogma of Christianity, was threefold and indivisible.

The lower temple carved out of the hill had the form



of a parallelogram, a coffin, a body, it was a heavy portico supported by almost Egyptian columns, it merged into the hill, into rough, unhewn nature. This temple was lighted up by lamps in tall Etrurian candelabra, and the daylight filtered sparsely into it through the second temple, passing through a transparent picture of the Nativity. In this crypt all the heroes who had fallen in 1812 were to be laid at rest. An eternal requiem was to be sung for those slain on the field of battle, the names of all of them from the generals to the private soldiers were to be carved upon the walls.

Upon this tomb, upon this graveyard, the second temple—the temple of outstretched hands, of life, of suffering, of labour, was laid out in the form of a Greek cross with the four ends equal. The colonnade leading to it was decorated with statues from figures of the Old Testament. At the entrance stood the prophets, they stood outside the temple pointing the way which they were not destined to tread. The whole story of the Gospels and of the Acts of the Apostles was depicted within this temple.

Above it, crowning it and completing it, was a third temple in the form of a dome. This temple, brightly lighted, was the temple of the spirit of untroubled peace, of eternity, expressed in its circular plan. Here there were neither pictures nor sculpture, only on the outside it was encircled by a ring of archangels and was covered by a colossal cupola.

I am now giving from memory Vitberg's leading idea. He had it worked out to the minutest detail and everywhere perfectly in harmony with Christian theology and architectural beauty.

The marvellous man spent his whole life over his design. During the ten years that he was on his trial he was occupied with nothing else and, though harassed by poverty and privation in exile, he devoted several hours

every day to his temple. He lived in it, he did not believe that it would never be built; memories, consolations, glory, all were in the artist's portfolio.

Perhaps one day some other artist, after the martyr's death, will shake the dust off those sheets and with reverence publish that record of martyrdom, in which was spent and wasted a life full of strength, for a moment gladdened by the radiance of glory, then worn out and crushed between a drill-sergeant Tsar, serf-senators, and pettifogging ministers.

The design was a work of genius, terrifying, staggering; that was why Alexander chose it, that was why it ought to have been carried out. It was said that the hill could not have borne the weight of the temple. I find that incredible in face of all the new resources of the American and English engineers, the tunnels which a train takes eight minutes to pass through, the hanging bridges, and so on.

Miloradovitch advised Vitberg to make the thick columns of the lower temple of single blocks of granite. On this some one observed that it would be very expensive to bring the granite blocks from Finland. 'That is just why we ought to get them,' answered Miloradovitch, 'if there were a quarry in the river Moskva there would be nothing wonderful in having them.'

Miloradovitch was a warrior poet and he understood poetry in general. Grand things are done by grand means.

Only nature does great things for nothing.

Even those who have no doubt of Vitberg's honesty find great fault with him for having undertaken the duty of directing operations, though he was an inexperienced young artist who knew nothing of official business. He ought to have confined himself to the part of architect. That is true.

But it is easy to make such criticisms sitting at home

in one's study. He undertook it just because he was young, inexperienced, and an artist; he undertook it because after his design had been accepted, everything seemed easy to him; he undertook it because the Tsar himself had proposed it to him, encouraged him, supported him. Is there any man whose head would not have been turned? . . . Are there any so prudent, so sober, so self-restrained? Well, if there are, they do not design colossal temples nor do they make 'stones speak'!

It need hardly be said that Vitberg was surrounded by a crowd of rogues, men who look on Russia as a field for plunder, on the service as a profitable line of business, on a public post as a lucky chance to make a fortune. It was easy to understand that they would dig a pit under Vitberg's feet. But that, after falling into it, he should be unable to get out again, was due also to the envy of some and the wounded vanity of others.

Vitberg's colleagues on the committee were the metropolitan Filaret, the Governor-General of Moscow, and the Senator Kushnikov; they were all offended to begin with by being associated with a young upstart, especially as he gave his opinion boldly and objected if he did not agree.

They helped to get him into trouble, they helped to slander him and with cold-blooded indifference completed his ruin afterwards.

They were helped in this by the fall of the mystically-minded minister Prince A. N. Golitsyn, and afterwards by the death of Alexander. Together with the fall of Golitsyn came the collapse of Freemasonry, of the Bible societies, of Lutheran pietism, which in the persons of Magnitsky at Kazan and of Runitch in Petersburg ran to grotesque extremes, to savage persecutions, to hysterical antics, to complete dementia and goodness knows what strange doings.

Savage, coarse, ignorant orthodoxy was supreme. It was preached by Fotiy the archimandrite of Novgorod, who lived on intimate (not physically, of course) terms with Countess Orlov. The daughter of the celebrated Alexey Grigoryevitch who strangled Peter III., she hoped to win the redemption of her father's soul by devoting herself to frenzied fanaticism, by giving up to Fotiy and his monks the greater part of her enormous estates, which had been forcibly snatched from the monasteries by Catherine.

But the one thing in which the Petersburg government is persistent, the one thing in which it does not change, however its principles and religions may change, is its unjust oppression and persecution. The violence of the Runitches and the Magnitskys was turned against the Runitches and the Magnitskys. The Bible Society, only yesterday patronised and approved—the prop of morality and religion, was to-day closed and sealed, and its members put almost on the level with counterfeit coiners; the *Messenger of Zion*, only yesterday recommended to all fathers of families, was more severely prohibited than Voltaire and Diderot, and its editor, Labzin, was exiled to Vologda.

Prince A. N. Golitsyn's fall involved Vitberg; everyone fell upon him, the committee complained of him, the metropolitan was offended and the governor-general was displeased. His answers were 'insolent' ('insolence' is one of the principal charges in the indictment of him); his subordinates were thieves—as though there were any one in the government service who was not a thief. Though indeed it is likely that there was more thieving among Vitberg's subordinates than among others; he had had no practice in superintending houses of correction and official thieves.

Alexander commanded Araktcheyev to investigate the case. He was sorry for Vitberg; he let him know

through one of his attendants that he believed in his rectitude.

But Alexander died and Araktcheyev fell. Under Nicholas, Vitberg's case at once took a turn for the worse. It was dragged on for ten years with terrible absurdities. On the points on which he was found guilty by the Criminal Court he was acquitted by the Senate. On those on which he was acquitted by the Court he was found guilty by the Senate. The committee of ministers found him guilty on all the charges. The Tsar, taking advantage of the 'most precious privilege of monarchs to show mercy and remit punishment,' added exile to Vyatka to his sentence.

And so Vitberg was sent into exile, dismissed from the service 'for abuse of the confidence of the Emperor Alexander and causing loss to the treasury.' He was fined, I believe, a million roubles, all his property was seized and sold by public auction, and a rumour was circulated that he had transferred countless millions to America.

I lived in the same house with Vitberg for two years and remained on intimate terms with him up to the time I left Vyatka. He had not saved the barest crust of bread; his family lived in the most awful poverty.

To give an idea of this case and of all similar ones in Russia, I will quote two little details which have remained in my memory.

Vitberg bought for timber for the temple a copse from a merchant called Lobanov; before the trees were felled Vitberg saw another wood, also Lobanov's, nearer to the river and asked him to exchange the one he had sold for the second one. The merchant consented. The trees were felled and the timber floated down the river. Later on more timber was needed, and Vitberg bought the first wood again. This was the celebrated accusation of having twice over bought the same

copse. Poor Lobanov was put in prison for it and died there.

The second instance came before my own eyes. Vitberg bought an estate for the temple. His idea was that the peasants bought with the land for the temple should be bound to furnish a certain number of workmen for it, and by this means should obtain complete freedom for themselves and their villages. It is amusing that our serf-owning senators found a suggestion of slavery in this measure!

Among other things, Vitberg wanted to buy my father's estate in the Ruzsky district on the bank of the Moskva. Marble had been found on it, and Vitberg asked permission to make a geological survey to discover what amount of it there was. My father gave permission. Vitberg went off to Petersburg.

Three months later my father learnt that quarrying was going forward on an immense scale, that the peasants' cornfields were heaped up with marble. He protested; no notice was taken. A protracted lawsuit began. At first they tried to throw all the blame on Vitberg, but unluckily it appeared that he had given no orders, and that it all had been done by the committee in his absence.

The case was taken before the Senate. To the general surprise the Senate's decision was not very far from common-sense. The marble quarried was to remain the property of the landowner as compensation for the ruined cornfields. The government money spent on quarrying and labour, mounting to a hundred thousand roubles, was to be made good by those who signed the contract for the work. Those who signed were Prince Golitsyn, Filaret, and Kushnikov. There was of course a great clamour and outcry. The case was taken before the Tsar. He had his system of justice. He directed that the offenders should be excused payment because—he wrote it with his own hand, as is printed in the minutes

of the Senate—‘The members of the committee did not know what they were signing.’ Even if we admit that the metropolitan was professionally bound to show a meek spirit, what are we to think of the other two grand gentlemen who accepted the Imperial favour on grounds so courteously and graciously explained?

But from whom was the hundred thousand to be taken? Government property, they say, is not burnt in the fire nor drowned in the water. It is only stolen, we might add. No need to hesitate, an adjutant-general was sent off post-haste to Moscow to investigate the question.

Strekalov investigated everything, set everything straight, arranged and settled it all in a few days: the marble was to be taken from the landowner to make good the sum paid for the quarrying; if, however, the landowner wished to retain the marble he was required to pay the hundred thousand. The landowner needed no compensation, because the value of his property was increased by the discovery of a new form of wealth upon it (this was the *chef-d’œuvre*!), but for the damaged fields of the peasants so many kopecks per dessyatin were to be allotted in accordance with the law of flooded meadows and ruined hayfields passed by Peter I.

The person really punished in this case was my father. There is no need to add that the quarrying of this marble was nevertheless brought up against Vitberg in his indictment.

Two years after Vitberg’s exile the merchants of Vyatka formed a project of building a new church.

Nicholas, desirous of killing all spirit of independence, of individuality, of imagination, and of freedom, everywhere and in everything, published a whole volume of designs for churches sanctioned by the Most High. If any one wanted to build a church he was absolutely obliged to select one of the approved plans. He is said to have forbidden the writing of Russian operas, con-



sidering that even those written by the adjutant Lvov, in the very office of the secret police, were good for nothing. But that was not enough: he ought to have published a collection of musical airs sanctioned by the Most High!

The Vyatka merchants after turning over the approved plans had the boldness to differ from the Tsar's taste. The design they sent in astonished Nicholas; he sanctioned it and sent instructions to the provincial authorities to see that the architect's ideas were faithfully carried out.

'Who made this design?' he asked the secretary.

'Vitberg, your Majesty.'

'What, the same Vitberg?'

'The same, your Majesty.'

And behold, like a bolt from the blue, comes permission for Vitberg to return to Moscow or Petersburg. The man had asked leave to clear his character and it had been refused; he made a successful design, and the Tsar bade him return—as though any one had ever doubted his artistic ability.

In Petersburg, almost perishing of want, he made one last effort to defend his honour. It was utterly unsuccessful. Vitberg asked the assistance of A. N. Golitsyn, but the latter thought it impossible to raise the case again, and advised Vitberg to write a very touching letter to the Tsarevitch begging for financial assistance. He undertook to do his best for him with the assistance of Zhukovsky,<sup>1</sup> and promised to get him a thousand silver roubles.

Vitberg refused.

I was in Petersburg for the last time in the beginning

<sup>1</sup> Zhukovsky (1786-1852), the well-known poet, was tutor to the Tsarevitch, afterwards Alexander II. He was a man of fine and generous character. His original work is not of the first order, but as a translator from the European and classical languages he was of invaluable service in the development of Russian culture.—*(Translator's Note.)*

of the winter of 1846 and there saw Vitberg. He was completely crushed. Even his old wrath against his enemies which I had liked so much had begun to die down; he had no more hope, he did nothing to escape from his position, blank despair was bringing him to his end, his life was shattered, he was waiting for death. If this was what Nicholas wanted he may be satisfied.

Whether the victim is still living I do not know, but I doubt it.

‘If it were not for my family, my children,’ he said at parting, ‘I would escape from Russia and go begging alms about the world. With the Vladimir cross on my neck I would calmly hold out to passers-by the hand pressed by the Emperor Alexander and tell them of my design and the fate of an artist in Russia!’

‘They shall hear in Europe of your fate, poor martyr,’ I thought; ‘I will answer for that.’

The society of Vitberg was a great solace to me in Vyatka. A grave serenity and a sort of solemnity gave something priestly to his manner. He was a man of very pure morals and in general more disposed to asceticism than indulgence; but his severity did not detract from the wealth and luxuriance of his artistic nature. He could give to his mysticism so plastic a form and so artistic a colouring that criticism died away on one’s lips; one was sorry to analyse, to dissect the shining images and misty pictures of his imagination.

Vitberg’s mysticism was partly due to his Scandinavian blood, it was the same coldly-thought-out dreaminess which we see in Swedenborg, and which is like the fiery reflection of sunbeams in the icy mountains and snows of Norway.

Vitberg’s influence made me waver, but my realistic temperament nevertheless gained the upper hand. I was not destined to rise into the third heaven, I was born a quite earthly creature. No tables turn at the touch

of my hands nor do rings shake at my glance. The daylight of thought is more akin to me than the moonlight of phantasy. But I was more disposed to mysticism at the period when I was living with Vitberg than at any other time. Separation, exile, the religious exaltation of the letters I received, the love which was filling my soul more and more intensely, and at the same time the oppressive feeling of remorse, all reinforced Vitberg's influence.

And for two years afterwards I was under the influence of ideas of a mystical socialist tinge, drawn from the Gospel and Jean-Jacques, after the style of French thinkers like Pierre Leroux.<sup>1</sup>

Ogaryov plunged into the sea of mysticism even before I did. In 1833 he was beginning to write the words for Gebel's<sup>2</sup> oratorio, *The Lost Paradise*. 'In the idea of a "Lost Paradise," Ogaryov wrote to me, 'there is the whole history of humanity'; so at that time, he too mistook the paradise of the ideal that we are seeking for a paradise we have lost.

In 1838 I wrote historical scenes in the religious socialist spirit, and at the time took them for dramas. In some I pictured the conflict of the pagan world with Christianity. In them Paul going to Rome raised a dead youth to new life. In others I described the conflict of the official Church with the Quakers and the departure of Wiliam Penn to America to the new world.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leroux, a follower of Saint Simon, of the first half of the nineteenth century.—(*Translator's Note*.)

<sup>2</sup> Gebel, a well-known musical composer of the period.

<sup>3</sup> I thought fit, I don't understand why, to write these scenes in verse. Probably I thought that anybody could write unrhymed five-foot iambs, since even Pogodin\* wrote them. In 1839 or

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\* Pogodin, chiefly known as an historian of a peculiar Slavophil tinge, was co-editor with Shevryov of the *Moskvityanin*, a reactionary journal, and wrote historical novels of little merit.—(*Translator's Note*.)

The mysticism of the gospel was soon replaced in me by the mysticism of science; fortunately I rid myself of the second also.

But to return to our modest little town of Hlynov, the name of which was, I don't know why, perhaps from Finnish patriotism, changed by Catherine II. to Vyatka.

In the desolation of my Vyatka exile, in the filthy atmosphere of government clerks, in that gloomy remote place, separated from all who were dear to me and put defenceless in the power of the governor, I spent many exquisite sacred moments, and met many warm hearts and friendly hands.

Where are you? What has happened to you, my friends of that snowy region? It is twenty years since we met. I dare say you have grown old as I have, you are marrying your daughters, you don't now drink champagne by the bottle and liqueur by the little glass. Which of you has grown rich, which of you has come to ruin, who is high up in the service, who is paralysed? Above all, is the memory of our old talks still living in you, are those chords which vibrated so eagerly with love and indignation still vibrating within you?

I have remained the same, that you know; I dare say

1840, I gave both the manuscripts to Byelinsky to read and calmly awaited his eulogies. But next day Byelinsky sent them back to me with a note in which he said: 'Do please have them copied to run on without being divided into lines, then I will read them with pleasure, as it is I am bothered all the time by the idea of their being in verse.'

Byelinsky killed both my dramatic efforts. It is always pleasant to pay one's debts. In 1841, Byelinsky published a long dialogue upon literature in the *Notes of the Fatherland*. 'How do you like my last article?' he asked me, as we were dining together *en petit comité* at Dusseau's. 'Very much,' I answered, 'all that you say is excellent, but tell me, please, how could you go on struggling for two hours to talk to that man without seeing at the first word that he was a fool?' 'That's perfectly true,' said Byelinsky, bursting into laughter. 'Well, my boy, that is crushing! Why, he is a perfect fool!'

news of me reaches you even from the banks of the Thames. Sometimes I think of you, always with love; I have some letters of that time, some of them are exceedingly dear to me and I like reading them over.

‘I am not ashamed to own to you that I am passing through a very bitter time,’ a young man wrote to me on the 26th of January 1838. ‘Help me for the sake of that life to which you called me, help me with your advice. I want to study, tell me of books, tell me anything you like, I will do all I can, give me a chance; it will be too bad of you if you don’t help me.’

‘I bless you,’ another wrote to me after I had gone away, ‘as the husbandman blesses the rain that has made fruitful his arid soil.’

It is not from vanity that I have quoted these lines, but because they are very precious to me. For the sake of those youthful appeals and youthful love, for the sake of the yearnings aroused in those hearts, one could well resign oneself to nine months’ imprisonment and three years’ exile to Vyatka.

And then twice a week the post from Moscow came in; with what excitement I waited by the post-office while the letters were sorted, with what a tremor I broke the seal and looked in the letter from home for a tiny note on thin paper written in a wonderfully fine and elegant hand.

I never read it in the post-office, but walked quietly home, deferring the minute of reading it, happy in the mere thought that there was a letter.

Those letters were all kept. I left them in Moscow. I long to read them over again and dread to touch them. . . .

Letters are more than memories, the very essence of events still lives in them; they are the very past just as it was, preserved and unfaded.

. . . Should one know it, see it all again? Should one touch with wrinkled hands one’s wedding garment?

## Chapter 17

THE TSAREVITCH AT VYATKA—THE FALL OF TYUFYAEV  
—I AM TRANSFERRED TO VLADIMIR—THE POLICE-  
CAPTAIN AT THE POSTING-STATION

THE Tsarevitch will visit Vyatka! The Tsarevitch is travelling about Russia to show himself and look at the country! This news interested all, but the governor, of course, more than any one. He was worried and did a number of incredibly stupid things: ordered the peasants along the high-road to be dressed in holiday attire, ordered the fences to be painted and the sidewalks to be repaired in the towns. At Orlov a poor widow who owned a small house told the mayor that she had no money to repair the sidewalk and he reported this to the governor. The latter ordered that the planks should be taken from her floors (the sidewalks there are made of wood), and that, should they not be sufficient, the repairs should be made at the government expense and the money recovered from her afterwards, even if it were necessary to sell her house by public auction. The sale did not take place, but the widow's floors were broken up.

Fifty versts from Vyatka there was the spot in which the wonder-working ikon of St. Nicholas of Hlynov appeared to the people of Novgorod. When emigrants from Novgorod settled at Hlynov (now Vyatka) they brought the ikon, but it disappeared and turned up again on the Great river fifty versts from Vyatka. They fetched it back again, and at the same time took a vow that if the ikon would stay they would carry it every year in a solemn procession to the Great river. This was the chief summer holiday in the Vyatka province; I believe it was on the 23rd of May. For twenty-four hours the ikon was travelling down the river in a magnificent boat with the bishop and all the clergy in full

vestments accompanying it. Hundreds of boats and craft of all sorts filled with peasants, men and women, Votyaks, and artisans, made up a bright-coloured procession following the sailing image, and foremost of all was the governor's decked boat covered with red cloth. This barbaric ceremony was a very fine show. Tens of thousands of people from districts near and far were awaiting the image on the banks of the Great river. They were all camping in noisy crowds about a small village, and what was most strange, crowds of heathen Votyaks, Tcheremisses, and even Tatars came to pray to the image, and, indeed, the festival is a thoroughly pagan ceremony. Outside the monastery-wall Votyaks and Russians bring sheep and calves to be sacrificed; they are killed on the spot, a monk reads a service over them, blesses and consecrates the meat, which is sold at a special window within the precincts. The meat is distributed in pieces to the people; in old days it used to be given for nothing, now the monks charge a few kopecks for every piece. So that a peasant who has presented a whole calf has to pay something for a piece for his own consumption. In the monastery-yard sit whole crowds of beggars, the halt, the blind, and the lame, who raise a lamentation in chorus. Lads—priests' sons or boys from the town—sit on the tombstones near the church with inkpots and cry: 'Who wants to be prayed for?' Peasant girls and women surround them, mentioning names, and the lads, saucily scratching with their pens, repeat: 'Marya, Marya, Akulina Stepanida, Father Ioann, Matryona. . . . Well, Auntie, you have got a lot; you've shelled out two kopecks, we can't take less than five; such a family—Ioann, Vassilisa, Iona, Marya, Yevpraxyea, Baby Katerina. . . .'

In the church there is a great crush and strange preferences are shown; one peasant woman will hand her neighbour a candle with exact instructions to put it up



'for our visitor,' another for 'our host.' The Vyatka monks and deacons are continually drunk during the whole time of this procession. They stop at the bigger villages on the way, and the peasants regale them enough to kill them.

So this popular holiday, to which the peasants had been accustomed for ages, the governor proposed to change to an earlier date, wishing to entertain the Tsarevitch who was to arrive on the 19th of May; he thought there would be no harm in St. Nicholas going on his visit three days earlier. The consent of the bishop was of course necessary; fortunately the bishop was an amenable person, and found nothing to protest against in the governor's intention of changing the festival of the 23rd of May to the 19th.

The governor sent a list of his ingenious plans for the reception of the Tsarevitch to the Tsar—as though to say, see how we fête your son. On reading this document the Tsar flew into a rage, and said to the Minister of Home Affairs: 'The governor and the bishop are fools, leave the holiday as it was.' The Minister gave the governor a good scolding, the Synod did the same to the bishop, and St. Nicholas went on his visit according to his old habits.

Among various instructions from Petersburg, orders came that in every provincial town an exhibition should be held of the various natural products and handicrafts of the district, and that the things exhibited should be arranged according to the three natural kingdoms. This division into animal, vegetable, and mineral greatly worried the officials, and Tyufyaev himself to some extent. That he might not make a mistake he made up his mind in spite of his dislike to summon me to give advice. 'Now, for instance, honey,' he said, 'where would you put honey? or a gilt frame—how are you to decide where it is to go?' Seeing from my answers that I had

wonderfully precise information concerning the three natural kingdoms, he offered me the task of arranging the exhibition.

While I was busy placing wooden vessels and Votyak dresses, honey and iron sieves, and Tyufyaev went on taking the most ferocious measures for the entertainment of his Imperial Highness at Vyatka, the Highness in question was graciously pleased to stay at Orlov, and the news of the arrest of the Orlov mayor burst like a clap of thunder on the town. Tyufyaev turned yellow, and there was an uncertainty apparent in his gait.

Five days before the Tsarevitch arrived in Orlov, the mayor wrote to Tyufyaev that the widow whose floor had been broken up to make the sidewalk was making a fuss, and that So-and-so, a wealthy merchant and a prominent person in the town, was boasting that he would tell the Tsarevitch everything. Tyufyaev disposed of the latter very adroitly; he told the mayor to have doubts of his sanity (the precedent of Petrovsky pleased him), and to send him to Vyatka to be examined by the doctors; this business could be delayed till the Tsarevitch had left the province of Vyatka, and that would be the end of it. The mayor did as he was bid, the merchant was put in the hospital at Vyatka.

At last the Tsarevitch arrived. He gave Tyufyaev a frigid bow, did not invite him to visit him, but at once sent for the doctor, Dr. Enohin, to inquire concerning the arrested merchant. He knew all about it. The Orlov widow had given him her petition, the other merchants and artisans told him all that was going on. Tyufyaev's face was more awry than ever. Things looked black for him. The mayor said straight out that he had written instructions from the governor for everything.

Dr. Enohin declared that the merchant was perfectly sane. Tyufyaev was lost.

Between seven and eight in the evening the Tsarevitch

visited the exhibition with his suite. Tyufyaev conducted him, explaining things incoherently, getting into a muddle and speaking of the ancient Siberian prince Tohtamysh as though he were a tsar. Zhukovsky and Arsenyev, seeing that things were not going well, asked me to show them the exhibition. I led them round.

The Tsarevitch's expression had none of that narrow severity, that cold merciless cruelty which was characteristic of his father ; his features were more suggestive of good nature and listlessness. He was about twenty, but was already beginning to grow stout.

The few words he said to me were friendly and very different from the hoarse, abrupt tones of his uncle Constantine and the menacing intonations of his father, which made the listener almost faint with terror.

When he had gone away, Zhukovsky and Arsenyev began asking me how I had come to Vyatka. They were surprised to hear a Vyatka official speak like a gentleman. They at once offered to speak of my position to the Tsarevitch, and did in fact do all that they could for me. The Tsarevitch approached the Tsar for permission for me to return to Petersburg. The Tsar replied that that would be unfair to the other exiles, but, in consideration of the Tsarevitch's representations, he ordered me to be transferred to Vladimir, which was geographically an improvement, being seven hundred versts nearer home. But of that later.

In the evening there was a ball. The musicians who had been sent for expressly from one of the factories arrived dead drunk ; the governor arranged that they should be locked up for twenty-four hours before the ball, escorted straight from the police-station to their seats in the orchestra and not allowed to leave them till the ball was over.

The ball was a stupid, awkward, extremely poor and extremely gaudy affair, as balls always are in little towns

on exceptional occasions. Police officers fussed about, government clerks in uniform huddled against the walls, ladies flocked round the Tsarevitch as savages do round travellers. . . . Apropos of the ladies, in one little town a *goûter* was arranged after the exhibition. The Tsarevitch took nothing but one peach, the stone of which he threw on the window-sill. All at once a tall figure saturated with spirits stepped out from the crowd of officials; it was the district assessor, notoriously a desperate character, who with measured steps approached the window, picked up the stone and put it in his pocket.

After the ball or the *goûter*, he approached one of the ladies of most consequence and offered her the stone gnawed by royalty; the lady accepted it with enthusiasm. Then he approached a second, then a third, all were in ecstasies.

The assessor had bought five peaches, cut out the stones, and made six ladies happy. Which had the real one? Each was suspicious of the genuineness of her own stone. . . .

After the departure of the Tsarevitch, Tyufyaev with a weight on his heart prepared to exchange his autocratic power for the chair of a senator; but worse than that happened.

Three weeks later the post brought from Petersburg papers addressed to the governor of the province. Everything was turned upside down in the secretariat; the registrar ran to say that they had received a decree; the office manager rushed to Tyufyaev, the latter gave out that he was ill and would not go to the office. Within an hour we learned that he had been dismissed *sans phrase*.

The whole town was delighted at the fall of the governor; there was something stifling, unclean, about his rule, a fetid odour of red tape, but for all that it was disgusting to look at the rejoicings of the officials.

Yes, every ass gave a parting kick to this wounded boar. The meanness of men was just as apparent as at the fall of Napoleon, though the catastrophe was on a different scale. Of late I had been on terms of open hostility with him, and he would have certainly sent me off to some obscure little town, if he had not been sent away himself. I had held aloof from him, and I had no reason to change my behaviour in regard to him. But the others, who only the day before had been cap in hand at the sight of his carriage, eagerly anticipating his wishes, fawning on his dog and offering snuff to his valet, now barely greeted him and made an outcry all over the town against the irregularities, the guilt of which they shared with him. This is nothing new, it has been repeated so continually in every age and every place that we must accept this meanness as a common trait of humanity and at any rate feel no surprise at it.

The new governor, Kornilov, arrived. He was a man of quite a different type: a tall, stout, lymphatic man about fifty with a pleasantly smiling face and cultured manner. He expressed himself with extraordinary grammatical correctness at great length with a precision and clarity calculated by its very excess to obscure the simplest subject. He had been at the Lyceum of Tsarskoye Syelo, had been a schoolfellow of Pushkin's, had served in the Guards, bought the new French books, liked talking of important subjects, and gave me De Tocqueville's book on *Democracy in America* on the day after his arrival.

The change was very great. The same rooms, the same furniture, but instead of a Tatar *baskak*, with the exterior of a Tunguz and the habits of a Siberian—a *doctrinaire*, rather a pedant, but at the same time quite a decent man. The new governor was intelligent, but his intelligence seemed somehow to shed light without giving warmth, like a bright, winter day which is pleasant

though one does not look for fruits from it. Moreover, he was a terrible formalist—not in a pettifogging way, but . . . how shall I express it? . . . it was formalism of a higher sort, but just as tiresome as any other.

As the new governor was really married, the house lost its ultra-bachelor and polygamous character. Of course this brought all the councillors back to their lawful spouses; bald old men no longer boasted of their conquests among the fair, but, on the contrary, alluded tenderly to their faded, angularly-bony, or monstrously fat wives.

Kornilov had some years before coming to Vyatka been promoted to be civil governor somewhere, straight from being a colonel in the Semyonovsky or Izmailovsky regiment. He went to his province knowing nothing of his duties. To begin with, like all novices he set to work to read everything. One day a document came to him from another province which he could make nothing of, though he read it two or three times. He called the secretary and gave it him to read. The secretary could not explain the business clearly either.

‘What will you do with that document,’ Kornilov asked him, ‘if I pass it on to the office?’

‘I shall hand it in to the third table, it’s in their section.’

‘Then the head-clerk of the third table knows what to do?’

‘To be sure he does, your Excellency, he has been in charge of that table for seven years.’

‘Send him to me.’

The head-clerk came in. Kornilov handing him the paper asked what was to be done. The head-clerk glanced through the document and informed him that they ought to make an inquiry in the palace of justice and send a notification to the police-captain.

‘But notify what?’

The head-clerk was nonplussed, and at last admitted

that it was difficult to express it in words, but that it was easy to write it.

‘Here is a chair, I beg you to write your answer.’

The head-clerk took up the pen and without hesitation briskly scribbled off two documents.

The governor took them, read them once, read them twice, but could make nothing of it. ‘I saw,’ he told me, smiling, ‘that it really was an answer to the document, and crossing myself I signed it. Nothing more was heard of the business—the answer was completely satisfactory.’

The news of my transfer to Vladimir came just before Christmas ; I was soon ready and set off.

My parting with Vyatka society was very warm. In that remote town I had made two or three friends among the young merchants. Every one wanted to show sympathy and kindness to the exile. Several sledges accompanied me as far as the first posting-station, and in spite of all my efforts to prevent it my sledge was filled up with a perfect load of all sorts of provisions and wine. Next day I reached Yaransk.

From Yaransk the road goes through endless pine forests. It was moonlight and very frosty at night. The little sledge flew along the narrow road. I have never seen such forests since, they go on in that way unbroken as far as Archangel, and sometimes reindeer come through them to the Vyatka province. The forest was for the most part of large trees ; the pines, of remarkable straightness, ran past the sledge like soldiers, tall and covered with snow from under which their black needles stuck out like bristles ; one would drop asleep and wake up again and still the regiments of pines would be marching rapidly by, sometimes shaking off the snow. The horses were changed at little clearings ; there was a tiny house lost among the trees, the horses were tied up to a trunk, the bells would begin tinkling, two or three Tcheremiss boys in embroidered shirts would run out



looking sleepy. The Votyak driver would swear at his companion in a husky alto, shout 'Aida,' begin singing song on two notes, and again pines and snow, snow and pines.

Just as I drove out of the Vyatka province it was my lot to take my last farewell of the official world, and it howed itself in all its glory *pour la clôture*.

We stopped at a posting-station, the driver began unharnessing the horses, when a tall peasant appeared in the porch and asked :

'Who has arrived ?'

'What 's that to do with you ?'

'Why, the police-captain told me to inquire, and I am the messenger of the rural court.'

'Well then, go into the station hut, my travelling permit is there.'

The peasant went away and came back a minute later, saying to the driver, 'He is not to have horses.'

This was too much. I jumped out of the sledge and went into the hut. A half-tipsy police-captain was sitting on a bench, dictating to a half-tipsy clerk. A man with fetters on his hands and feet was sitting or rather lying on another bench in the corner. Several bottles glasses, tobacco ash, and bundles of papers were scattered about.

'Where is the police-captain ?' I asked in a loud voice as I went in.

'The police-captain 's here,' answered the half-tipsy man whom I recognised as Lazarev, a man I had seen in Vyatka. As he spoke he fixed a rude and impudent stare upon me, and all at once rushed at me with open arms.

I must explain that after Tyufyaev's downfall the officials, seeing that I was on rather good terms with the governor, had began making up to me.

I stopped him with my hand and asked him very

gravely, 'How could you give orders that I shouldn't have horses. What nonsense is this, stopping travellers on the high-road?'

'Why, I was joking; upon my soul, aren't you ashamed to be angry! Here, horses, order the horses! Why are you standing there, you rascal?' he shouted to the messenger. 'Please have a cup of tea with rum.'

'Thank you.'

'But haven't we any champagne . . .' He hurried to the bottles, they were all empty.

'What are you doing here?'

'An inquiry, this fine fellow here has killed his father and sister with an axe, in a quarrel, through jealousy.'

'So that's why you are drinking together?'

The police-captain was disconcerted. I glanced at the Tcheremiss; he was a young fellow of twenty, with nothing ferocious about his face, which was typically oriental, with shining, narrow eyes and black hair.

It was all so disgusting that I went out into the yard again. The police-captain ran out after me with a glass in one hand and a bottle of rum in the other, and pressed me to have a drink.

To get rid of him I drank some; he caught hold of my hand and said: 'I am sorry, there, I am sorry! there it is, but I hope you won't speak of it to his Excellency, don't ruin an honourable man!' With that the police-captain *seized my hand and kissed it*, repeating a dozen times over: 'For God's sake don't ruin an honourable man.' I pulled away my hand in disgust and said to him:

'Oh get away, as though I were likely to tell him.'

'But how can I be of service to you?'

'See they make haste and harness the horses.'

'Look alive,' he shouted, 'Aida, aida!' and he himself began dragging at the straps and harness.

This incident is vividly imprinted on my memory.

In 1841, when I was for the last time in Petersburg, I had to go to the secretariat of the Minister of Home Affairs to try and get a passport. While I was talking to the head-clerk of the table, a gentleman passed . . . shaking hands familiarly with the magnates of the secretariat and bowing condescendingly to the head-clerks of the tables. 'Bah, hang it all,' I thought, 'surely that is he! Who is that?' I asked.

'Lazarev, a clerk of special commissions and a great authority in the ministry.'

'Was he once a police-captain in the Vyatka province?'

'Yes.'

'Well, I congratulate you, gentlemen, nine years ago he kissed my hand.'

Perovsky was a master in the choice of men.

## Chapter 18

### THE BEGINNING OF MY LIFE AT VLADIMIR

WHEN I went to get into my sledge at Kosmodemiansk it was harnessed in the Russian style, three horses abreast, and the shaft horse with the yoke over its head was gaily jingling the bells.

In Perm and Vyatka the horses are put in tandem, one before the other or two side by side and the third in front. So my heart throbbed with delight when I saw the familiar troika.

‘Come now, show us your mettle,’ I said to the young lad who sat smartly on the box in an unlined sheepskin and stiff gauntlets which barely allowed his fingers to close enough to take fifteen kopecks from my hand.

‘We’ll do our best, sir, we’ll do our best. Hey, darlings! Now, sir,’ he said, turning suddenly to me, ‘you only hold on, there is a hill yonder, so I will let them go.’

It was a steep descent to the Volga which was used as a road in the winter.

He certainly did let the horses go. The sledge bounded from right to left, from left to right, as the horses flew down-hill; the driver was tremendously pleased, and indeed, sinful man that I am, so was I—it is the Russian temperament.

So I raced with posting horses into 1838—into the best, the brightest year of my life. I will describe how we saw the New Year in.

Eighty versts from Nizhni, we, *i.e.* Matvey, my valet, and I, went into the station-superintendent’s to warm ourselves. There was a very sharp frost, and it was windy too. The superintendent, a thin, sickly, pitiful-looking man, made the inscription in my travelling permit, dictating every letter to himself and yet making mistakes. I took off my fur-lined coat and walked up and down

the room in immense fur boots, Matvey was warming himself at the red-hot stove, the superintendent muttered, while a wooden clock ticked on a faint, cracked note.

‘I say,’ Matvey said to me, ‘it will soon be twelve o’clock, it’s the New Year, you know. I will bring something,’ he added, looking at me half-inquiringly, ‘from the stores they gave us at Vyatka.’ And without waiting for an answer he ran to fetch bottles and a parcel of food.

Matvey, of whom I shall have more to say later, was more than a servant, he was a friend, a younger brother to me. A Moscow artisan, apprenticed to Sonnenberg to learn the art of bookbinding, in which Sonnenberg, however, was not very proficient, he passed into my hands.

I knew that if I refused it would disappoint Matvey, besides I had nothing against celebrating the day at the posting-station. . . . The New Year is a station of a sort.

Matvey brought ham and champagne. The champagne turned out to be frozen solid; the ham could have been chopped with an axe, it was all glistening with ice; but *à la guerre comme à la guerre*. ‘May the New Year bring new happiness.’ Yes indeed, new happiness. Was I not on my homeward way? Every hour was bringing me nearer to Moscow—my heart was full of hope.

The frozen champagne did not exactly please the superintendent. I added half a glass of rum to his wine. This new ‘*half-and-half*’ had a great success.

The driver, whom I also invited to join us, was still more extreme in his views; he sprinkled pepper into the glass of foaming wine, stirred it with a spoon, drank it off at one gulp, uttered a painful sigh and almost with a moan added: ‘It did scorch fine!’

The superintendent himself tucked me into the sledge, and was so zealous in his attentions that he dropped the

lighted candle into the hay and could not find it afterwards. He was in great spirits and kept repeating: 'You 've given me a New Year's Eve, too!'

The scorched driver whipped up the horses.

At eight o'clock on the following evening I reached Vladimir and put up at the hotel, which is extremely accurately described in the *Tarantass* with its fowls in rice, its dough-like pastry, and vinegar by way of Bordeaux.

'A man was asking for you this morning, he's waiting at the beer-shop,' the waiter, who wore the rakish parting and killing lovelocks, which in old days were only affected by Russian waiters, but are now worn by Louis Napoleon also, told me after reading my name on my travel permit.

I could not conceive who this could be. 'But here he is,' added the waiter, moving aside.

What I saw first, however, was not a man but a tray of terrific size, on which were piles of all sorts of good things, a cake and cracknels, oranges and apples, eggs, almonds, raisins . . . and behind the tray appeared the grey head and blue eyes of the village elder, from my father's Vladimir estate.

'Gavril Semyonitch,' I cried, and rushed to hug him. This was the first of our own people, the first figure out of my former life whom I met after imprisonment and exile. I could not take my eyes off the intelligent old man, and felt as though I would never say all I had to say to him. He was the living proof of my nearness to Moscow, to my home, to my friends; only three days before, he had seen them all, he brought me greetings from all of them. . . . So it was not so far away after all!

The governor, who was a clever Greek called Kuruta, had a thorough knowledge of human nature, and had long ceased to have a strong preference for good or evil. He grasped my position at once and did not make the

slightest attempt to worry me. Office work was not even referred to; he commissioned me and a master at the high school to edit the *Vladimir Provincial News*—that was my only duty.

The work was familiar to me; I had in Vyatka successfully edited the unofficial part of the *Provincial News*, and had published in it an article which almost got my successor into trouble. Describing the festival on the Great river, I said that the mutton sacrificed to St. Nicholas at Hlynov used in old days to be distributed to the poor, but now was sold. The bishop was incensed and the governor had difficulty in persuading him to let the matter drop.

These provincial newspapers were introduced in 1837. The very original idea of training the inhabitants of the land of silence and dumbness to express themselves in print occurred to Bludov the Minister of Home Affairs. The latter, famous for being chosen to continue Karamzin's *History*, though he never actually added a line to it, and for being the author of the report of the committee of investigation into the affair of the 14th of December, which it would have been better not to write at all, belonged to the group of political doctrinaires who appeared on the scene at the end of the reign of Alexander. They were intelligent, cultured, old 'Arzamass geese'<sup>1</sup> who had risen in the service. They could write Russian, were patriots, and were so zealously engaged in the history of their native land that they had no time to give serious attention to its present condition. They all cherished the never-to-be-forgotten memory of N. M. Karamzin, loved Zhukovsky, knew Krylov by heart, and used to go to Moscow to converse with I. I. Dmitriev in his house in Sadovy Street, where I too visited him as a student,

<sup>1</sup> The reference is to the 'Arzamass,' a literary club of which Karamzin, Batyushkov, Uvarov, this Bludov and some others were members. The town Arzamass is noted for its geese.—(Translator's Note.)



armed with romantic prejudices, a personal acquaintance with N. Polevoy, and a concealed disapproval of the fact that Dmitriev, who was a poet, should be Minister of Justice. Great things were hoped of them, and like most doctrinaires of all countries they did nothing. Perhaps they might have succeeded in leaving more permanent traces under Alexander, but Alexander died and left them with nothing but their desire to do something worth doing.

At Monaco there is an inscription on the tombstone of one of the hereditary princes: 'Here lies the body of Florestan So-and-so—he desired to do good to his subjects.'<sup>1</sup> Our doctrinaires also desired to do good, not to their own subjects but to the subjects of Nicholas, but they reckoned without their host. I do not know who hindered Florestan, but they were hindered by our Florestan. They were drawn into taking part in all the measures detrimental to Russia and had to restrict themselves to useless innovations, mere alterations of name and form. Every head of a department among us thinks it his duty to produce at intervals a project, an innovation, usually for the worse but sometimes simply neutral. They thought it necessary for instance to call the secretary in the governor's office by a name of purely Russian origin, while they left the secretary of the provincial office untranslated into Russian. I remember that the Minister of Justice brought forward a plan for necessary changes in the uniforms of civil servants. This scheme opened in a majestic and solemn style: 'taking into special consideration the lack of unity, of standard, in the make and pattern of certain uniforms in the civil department and adopting as a fundamental principle,' and so on.

Possessed by the same mania for reform the Minister of Home Affairs replaced the rural assessors by police

<sup>1</sup> *Il a voulu le bien de ses sujets.*

inspectors. The assessors lived in the towns and used to visit the villages. The police inspectors sometimes met together in the town but lived permanently in the country. In this way all the peasants were put under the supervision of the police and this was done with full knowledge of the predatory, rapacious, corrupt character of our police officials. Bludov initiated the policeman into the secrets of the peasants' industry and wealth, into their family life, into the affairs of the commune, and in this way attacked the last stronghold of peasant life. Fortunately our villages are very many and there are only two police inspectors in a district.

Almost at the same time the same Bludov had the notion of establishing provincial newspapers. In Russia, although the government has no regard for popular education, it has literary pretensions, and while in England, for instance, there are no official organs, every one of our departments has its own magazine, and so have the universities and the academy. We have journals relating to mining, to dry-salting, to marine affairs, and to means of communication, some in Russian, others in French or German. All these are published at the government expense; contracts for literary articles are made with the department exactly as contracts for fuel and candles, but without competition; there are plenty of statistics, invented figures and fantastic inferences from them. After monopolising everything else, the government has now taken the monopoly of talk and, imposing silence on every one else, has begun chattering unceasingly. Continuing this system, Bludov commanded every provincial government to publish its own newspaper, which was to have an unofficial part for articles on historical, literary, and other subjects.

No sooner said than done, and the officials in fifty provinces were tearing their hair over this unofficial part. Priests of seminary education, doctors of medicine,

high-school teachers, all who could be suspected of a tinge of culture and ability to spell correctly were requisitioned. After much reflection and reading over of the *Library of Good Reading* and the *Notes of the Fatherland*, with inward tremors and misgivings, they at last set to work to write articles.

The desire to see one's name in print is one of the strongest artificial passions of this bookish age. Nevertheless it needs favourable circumstances to induce people to expose their efforts to public criticism. People who would never have dared to dream of sending their essays to the *Moscow News* or to a Petersburg magazine, were ready to publish them at home. And, meanwhile, the fatal habit of the newspaper took root. And, indeed, it may not be amiss to have an instrument ready. The printing press, too, is an unruly member.

My colleague in the editorship was also a Moscow graduate and of the same faculty. I have not the heart to speak of him with a smile because of his sad death, and yet he was an absurd figure up to the end. Though far from being stupid, he was extraordinarily clumsy and awkward. It would be hard to find an ugliness not merely so complete but so great, that is, on so large a scale. His face was half as large again as ordinary and somehow rugged-looking; a huge fish-like mouth reached to his ears, white eyelashes did not shade but rather emphasised his pale grey eyes, his skull was scantily covered with bristling hair, and at the same time he was a head taller than I was, round-shouldered, and very untidy in his appearance.

Even his name was such that a sentry at Vladimir locked him up on account of it. Late one evening he was walking past the governor's house, wrapped up in his overcoat, carrying a pocket telescope; he stood still and took aim with it at some planet. This perturbed the sentry who probably regarded stars as public property





